

THE GREAT EPIC OF ISRAEL

THE GREAT EPIC OF ISRAEL

THE WEB OF MYTH, LEGEND, HISTORY, LAW,
ORACLE, WISDOM AND POETRY OF
THE ANCIENT HEBREWS

BY

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TO HIS DEVOTED WIFE
CAROLINE CHILD FISKE
THE AUTHOR DEDICATES THIS VOLUME

PREFACE

It is the purpose of this volume to encourage a revival of the reading or study of the ancient Scriptures of the Jews, not by scholars or those who make a professional use of them, but by the people at large. To this generation they have as a whole become unattractive and fallen into neglect, except for a conventional and enforced respect, on account of the false light in which they have been left for so many centuries. The present object is to put them in their true light and give them a new interest for the modern man.

The common intelligence will no longer accept the dogma that they are divine revelation, except as divine revelation is to be traced in all human development; or that they are the specially inspired word of God and contain in all parts infallible truth, to be unquestioningly accepted, for the common intelligence has come to know better. It has been taught to discriminate and to apply reason, and its liberty is not to be excluded from this one field. All truth may be accounted divine, all great thoughts and noble sentiments may be regarded as inspired, but no more in this literature than in others, ancient and modern. The

voice of God did not vociferate in one small country for a few centuries and then fall into silence. The spirit of God did not inform men in that one place and time and then withdraw itself to the remote bounds of the universe. It was and is and will be from everlasting to everlasting and forever the same, in all time and place, and it pervades all life.

The author pretends to no new discovery. What he has to say is derived from the researches of many scholars who have wrought with growing assiduity and with increasing light during the greater part of the past century. The results are known to teachers and preachers, who still shrink from teaching and preaching the truth freely and candidly, as some at least of them know it to be. Current theology and divinity are too much under the duress of old dogma to speak out. The lore of scholars is open to those who choose to study it, but for the most part it is too detailed, too argumentative, too heavy or too dry, for the common reader, and it works slowly through a reluctant clergy and an unlearned laity.

The present writer is under no bonds. He has no fear or shrinking. He loves the truth and desires to spread it abroad, knowing that only good can come of the light, while darkness harbors much that is evil. It is not originality that he professes, but independence, not special ability, but the dower of common sense and a capacity

for setting forth clearly what he learns and thinks, to be "understanded of the people." It is from interest that he has studied this subject, and he writes in the hope of exciting interest in others and contributing to the spread of knowledge of the truth as it is revealed through human experience. He does not encumber his pages by citing authorities or dealing with controversy, having only room to give results as sifted and judged by himself. But the fruits of long and varied research and all the references that may be desired, to a recent date, are stored in the "Encyclopædia Biblica," to which all are directed for details, reasons and conclusions. Comparatively little has been added since its publication.

Nothing could be farther from the writer's wish than to impair or undermine the foundations of religious faith. To be abiding these must be of truth and they must rest upon knowledge and reason, as they are revealed to man in his progress onward and upward. Unlike material piling they must be kept sound not by being buried in darkness and dampness, but by being exposed to light and air. Judaism, like other religions, consecrated its Scriptures. Christianity borrowed from both Judaism and heathenism in framing its dogmas, and it accepted the consecration of the Jewish Scriptures for the sake of these. But Judaism has advanced, and Christianity has advanced, in spite of clinging to outworn dogmas

and the consecration of councils in dark ages. The church still needs to advance and to preserve all that is sacred in its literature; but illumination is the test of sanctity. No mass bound up in past ages is all sacred nor can it contain all that is sacred. It should be tried and that which is good should be held fast.

The consecrated writings of the Jews are here treated as an epic of the people of Israel in their great days. Such in effect they really are, and they are so presented in the order of their development for better understanding and greater interest. The chief claim to originality in this work lies in so presenting them. The author hopes it will serve its desired end of making them more read, better understood and more profitable to the soul of man.

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THE GREAT EPIC OF ISRAEL

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I

THE PECULIAR PEOPLE

THE most remarkable thing in what we call ancient history is the peculiar intellectual, moral and religious development of a small people who occupied a narrow territory, shut in from the Mediterranean Sea, on the pathway between the great empire of the Tigris and the Euphrates and that of the Nile. Compared with those empires the nation formed by this people was not ancient, and in national resources and power it was utterly insignificant. The land which it acquired by conquest and held with difficulty had long before been overrun by the armies of Babylonia and Egypt, and held in possession by one or the other of those great powers, whose civilisation was old before Israel was born. Records and inscriptions discovered within the last twenty-five years show that Palestine was subject to Egypt and ruled by its governors as late as 1400 B. C., when the Nile region had been a seat of power, learning and religion for more than two thousand years, and the

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land of the Euphrates had been its rival for many centuries.

In a fortunate interval of quiescence between these great "world powers," a part of the people who became known as Israel escaped from a condition of servitude and oppression within the borders of Egypt, and made their way through the deserts of Arabia, with only petty tribes native to the region to contend with, and with accretions from others got possession of a strip of territory east of the Jordan. Lingering there until they gained cohesion and strength, they finally crossed the river and after bloody conflicts with the tribes occupying the land known as Canaan, and in later times as Palestine, succeeded in establishing themselves in possession. For a long time their hold was precarious. Broken into tribes or clans, they had no regularly organized government, and when attacked by hostile neighbours, as they frequently were, they depended upon leaders, or "heroes," who rose to command them in battles of defence or vengeance. Finally, when they had grown sufficiently in numbers and in strength, and experience had taught them the necessity of national power, with civil and military organisation, if they were to survive and flourish, they established a kingdom, a little more than 1,000 years before the Christian era. In the meantime they had learned much from their strongest neighbours, the Philistines and the Phœnicians, especially the

latter, with whom they maintained relations of amity while the former were their bitter enemies. Coming from beyond the river they were called Hebrews or those "from beyond." They adopted and modified the language of the conquered Canaanites, borrowed writing from the Phœnicians and some time after the establishment of the kingdom developed a literature.

Where these people originally came from is not certainly known. We have little more than their own traditions, preserved in their own peculiar way, to guide us in seeking for their origin. They were probably nomadic tribes of Arabians, akin to the Edomites, Moabites and Ammonites, which had wandered with flocks and herds, perhaps to the borders of the Euphrates Valley and to the confines of Egypt, and some of which in a time of famine had been kept in the latter country until they fell into a state of servitude, or forced labor, under its rulers. They certainly had traditions of escape or deliverance from this servitude and of the struggle through the deserts to freedom, and for centuries they cherished fear and hatred for Egypt, while their earliest writers took pride in giving them a mythical ancestry in the Chaldean Empire.

It was a century and more after the kingdom was established and some time after it had been divided by the tearing away of the larger and more flourishing part by revolt on the death of Sol-

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omon, that the remarkable literary development of this people began. Just when the Hebrew language took form in writing cannot be ascertained, but like all primitive peoples Israel preserved its first traditions by oral transmission. Like others it had its myths and legends, its tales of deliverers from bondage or peril and of heroes in warfare, and these were chanted in songs or narrated in stories from generation to generation until they became a common stock of material for coming writers. Like all ancient people also, it had its religion, its conception of deity and his relation to man, and in regard to this its most striking peculiarity appears.

In spite of successive versions during several centuries, the mass of literature which constitutes the great epic of its national life still contains traces of a time when it shared with other early races a belief in many gods representing the powers of nature. Its designation for the deity, Elohim, is a plural and a relic of that time. One of the most ancient fragments embedded in its literature speaks of the "Sons of God" who had converse with the daughters of men and begat giants and men of renown, after the manner of other old mythologies. The use of the word "Sons of God" here is equivalent to "Gods," as "Sons of prophets" was used to designate members of schools or coteries of prophets, "Children of Israel" or of Moab was used for Israelites or Mo-

abites, and "Sons of men" had the same meaning as men. Another ancient fragment, properly translated, speaks of wine as cheering gods and men, and there is also a relic of the old polytheistic faith in the myth of the Garden of Eden where "the Lord God" is represented as saying of Adam, "the man is become as one of us to know good and evil."

In the early patriarchal stories and the legends of heroes the deity, originally a tribal god called by the name of Yahweh, ("Jehovah"), was sometimes represented as appearing on the earth in the form of a man. He was evidently conceived of in this guise in the Eden myth when he "walked in the garden in the cool of the day" and talked with Adam. In this guise he appeared and talked with Abram under the Oaks of Mamre while on his way to Sodom to ascertain if its iniquity was as bad as it had been reported to be. Sometimes he is represented as sending an "angel," or messenger, who was a kind of similitude of his own personality, as in the case of the "angel of God" who appeared to the mother of Samson and promised the child's birth. Again in the Jacob myth he is described as testing that personage by wrestling with him all night and giving him a new name. There are other instances of his appearing in the guise of a human being, but in later conceptions he became invisible, and the sight of him was supposed to be dangerous, if not fatal. Moses is

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represented as being vouchsafed a look at his back after he had passed by while the hand of the god covered the man as he stood in a cleft of the rock. Often he is described as speaking to man while he remained himself invisible, and often as manifesting his presence in fire, or light or darkness or some natural phenomenon.

In the mixture of tradition, legend and myth connected with the escape or deliverance from Egypt, this deity is represented as peculiarly the God of Israel and as having his abode on Mount Sinai, or Horeb, where he awaited his time for rescuing the people from their bondage. He had no relation to the rest of mankind except as a mighty enemy to those who were enemies of his people. They had their own gods, whose reality and whose rights in their own domain were not disputed. It was as the God only of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and of their descendants that he appeared to Moses and through him and Aaron inflicted the plagues upon Egypt and brought his people out with a "mighty hand and an outstretched arm," divided the waters of the Red Sea and guided them in cloud and flame, while the Egyptian armies were overwhelmed. Here he was a god of craft and not of justice, so far as any but his own people were concerned, a god of severity and anger with his own people when they disobeyed his commands given through their leader, a god of battles and vengeance in conflict

with their enemies. He appears in clouds and thunder and lightning on Mount Sinai to fulminate his laws through Moses. In the Song of Deborah in the time of the "Judges," which is older than these myths and legends of the "Exodus," his dwelling place is supposed to be on Mount Sinai, and he comes from there careering over the mountains in storm clouds to rescue his people from the army of Sisera.

Such a conception of deity is as mythical as that of other ancient peoples. The tribal god Yahweh had dwelt in the mountain fastnesses and guarded and guided his people, inspiring them with fear and communicating his commands through those who assumed to be his servants or his spokesmen, and who doubtless believed themselves to be such. He had the characteristics of an unseen despot and was the ideal of a mighty ruler in a barbarous age. He was placated not only by humble submission, but by offerings and sacrifices, the more precious the more acceptable and prevailing. There are traces of evidence that in the earliest days these extended to the sacrifice of children in the worship of Yahweh as in that of Baal and of Chemosh. There is a vestige of this in the story of Jephthah and his daughter, and the myth of the offering of Isaac on Mount Moriah was symbolical of the substitution of the choicest animals for the highest pledge of devotion. Until late in the history of the two Kingdoms there was little dif-

ference between the common worship of the people of Israel, at their various shrines away from the temple of Jerusalem, and that of the heathen around them, and sometimes the very sanctuary of "the Lord" on Mount Zion was invaded by pagan abominations. They had images of Yahweh, and their priests practised divination, and there were times when there was such a relapse that children again "passed through fire" in the Valley of the Sons of Hinnom.

Midway in the history of the Kingdoms a remarkable evolution took place in the religious and ethical conceptions of this people. Their seers and diviners developed into a class of teachers which through translation acquired the title of "prophets," though the original had not the meaning commonly implied by that term. The transition was not so abrupt as it appears in their epic literature, for the latter was modified by revision to conform to later ideas. The influence of the prophet appears to have first become potent in setting up and guiding the earliest King, Saul; but Samuel seems to have retained much of the character of the ancient priest and diviner, and to have been transformed in the later accounts of the period. Nathan, the mentor and monitor of David, spoke to the King in the name of Yahweh, but disguised his reproaches in the form of parable. At that time the deity was still represented by images and consulted by mechanical de-

vices. Solomon, notwithstanding his worldliness and his yielding to heathen enticement, was assumed by the chroniclers of a later time to be so endowed with wisdom that he needed no prophet. It is probable that no one had the temerity to act in that capacity with so mighty a potentate in his little realm; but one appeared to encourage a revolt against him and to represent by symbolical action the tearing away of the better part of the kingdom and the setting up of a rival monarchy, under the leader of the revolt, Jeroboam the Son of Nebat.

It was well along in the turbulent history of the new Kingdom of Israel, when an alliance of its King, Ahab, with the royal house of Phœnicia threatened a lapse from the worship of Yahweh to that of Baal and Ashtoreth, or Astarté, that the spirit of prophetism was aroused to an ardent defence of the national God and his worship, the loss of which would mean the abandonment and destruction of the nation. There is little evidence that the character of the worship in the northern Kingdom then differed materially from that of the neighbouring peoples of Phœnicia and Syria or the Canaanite tribes, or that the ethical standard had greatly improved, when the legendary figure of Elijah appeared in the conflict against a relapse to heathenism. The reality behind that misty figure was a fiery champion of the national religion and of the mighty god to whom the people owed

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their deliverance from Egypt, the possession of the land which they had inherited from mythical ancestors with whom that god had made a compact of mutual fidelity. Elisha, who carried on the contest when the house of Ahab was slaughtered and the kingdom was in dangerous conflict with Syria, is scarcely less legendary and obscured in the mists of history; and there is still little sign of the higher ethical and religious spirit that was about to develop.

This first appeared, so far as its authentic utterance has been preserved, in Amos, a herdsman of Judah, who went to the chief shrine of the Northern Kingdom at Bethel to utter his solemn rebukes and impressive warnings. The shadows of conflict with hostile powers of the north and east were then impending, and in the prophet's mind the only hope of escape was in renewed fidelity and devotion to the God of Israel and obedience to his commands. Now the national offence took on a moral character. It consisted in the wickedness and injustice of the time, the iniquities of the people and their rulers. The commands of God were not for sacrifices and burnt offerings, or vain oblations and feast days, but for justice and mercy and purity of life. Therein was that obedience and devotion in which alone was safety and salvation from powerful enemies. That became the keynote of prophecy from that

time, the fundamental principle in the constitution of theocracy.

And the doctrine of theocracy, or the rule of God, became the loftiest article of political faith of the "peculiar people," the constant and impressive burden of their great epic, which has rolled down the centuries from that day to this. Other nations believed that their gods ruled in the affairs of men, but their conceptions were rude and barbaric in comparison with those of the prophets of Israel, in whom the highest genius of the nation found expression. In them the conception of Israel's God was exalted and purified. He was the God of justice, of righteousness, of mercy, of love for those who obeyed him and severity for those who were disobedient and rebellious. While Israel was still his peculiar care, he was above all Gods and all nations and peoples. They were subject to his will and were used to serve his purposes. He was the creator of heaven and earth and of all mankind, but he had chosen this one people for his own and would preserve it forever. He would use others to chastise it when it went wrong and to correct its evil tendencies; he might even destroy it as a nation, but he would surely redeem a purified and righteous remnant and restore the Kingdom of Zion with a reunited Israel, which should grow in power and finally bring all the earth under its sway.

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This was the sublime doctrine of theocracy which developed through the great prophets and survived all disasters. The destruction of Samaria by Assyria and of Jerusalem by Babylon could not extinguish it. It was in part the effect and in part the cause of the chief characteristic of the peculiar people, an enormous pride of race, an overweening sense of superiority, a potent national consciousness, out of all proportion to the nation's magnitude or material power. Nor was this without foundation in the genius of the people, which rose in moral, if not intellectual altitude, far above, not only the surrounding people with which they came into immediate comparison, but the vast empires by which they were finally overwhelmed and subdued though not extinguished, scattered but not trodden out. It was this indomitable self-assertion that enabled them to weld their literature, except what they chose to reject, into one sublime epic which they stamped as divine in its origin and as sacred in its character, and imposed upon a large part of the world at their own valuation "even unto this day." Their promises were unfulfilled, their hopes were disappointed, their nation was destroyed, they were scattered over the face of the earth, despised, rejected and persecuted, and yet their pride of race was never extinguished, and they refused to be effaced as a peculiar people, still holding that the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob was the ruler of the world, with

a special love for the race with which he made an everlasting covenant. And the wonder of human history is the power their superior pretension has had for so many centuries in guarding their "sacred" literature, as a holy heritage of mankind, from the calm analysis to which all other ancient literature has been subjected, and sealing it against the judgment of human reason.

II

LITERARY DEVELOPMENT OF ISRAEL

WHAT may properly be called literary development did not begin among the people of Israel until after the victories of David had established the kingdom, and it made little progress before the prosperous reign of Solomon was over. It gained its first real impetus in the Northern Kingdom after the division into two rival realms, of which that was at first the more powerful and flourishing, and the more progressive. Though Solomon had established a relation of amity with Egypt and taken a daughter of the reigning Pharaoh as one of his many wives, when Jeroboam headed a revolt against the King's oppressive treatment of the people of the proud tribe of Ephraim he fled to that country and was evidently treated with consideration by its ruler. It is probable that he brought back much of the tradition and the lore which were afterwards used in the early literature of his kingdom. He or some companion of his may have been the real person most versed in the "learning of the Egyptians" at that time.

Long before, no doubt, there had been an oral literature in the customary form of songs and

chants, of legends and mythical tales, and many of these were first reduced to writing in the time of David and Solomon. Two collections are referred to by the titles, the "Book of the Wars of Yahweh" and the "Book of the Upright," and some scraps from each were preserved, with indications that they furnished the groundwork of later narratives. David's lament over the death of Saul and Jonathan is said to have been taught to the people and afterwards enbalméd in the "Book of the Upright," which indicates that the written form was later than David's time. Solomon's speech at the dedication of the temple is believed by some to have found a place in the same repository. Hebrew poetry, of which the chief rhythmical characteristic was a repetition or variation of expression called "parallelism," had evidently a considerable development before it was ever reduced to writing. The "Song of Deborah" at the victory over Sisera is the earliest example preserved and though sadly mutilated in the process it is a veritable antique gem. What is called the "Blessing of Jacob" near the end of the Book of Genesis, which sets forth the characteristics of the tribes under personal names, in the semblance of what is not altogether a "blessing," had its origin before the division of the Kingdom, but not earlier than the peaceful reign of Solomon. The discourses of Balaam in the Book of Numbers, which have a similar char-

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acter, must have originated at about the same time. Whatever the occasion or the original authorship of these productions, they were quite independent of the setting in which they are now found.

The first writers had not only the advantage of a rich heritage of oral literature, but they undoubtedly had considerable knowledge of the learning of Egypt, the art of Phœnicia and the wisdom of the East. Communication by caravan between the Euphrates region and that of the Nile through Syria, Israel and Philistia was much more common than we have been accustomed to suppose, and in the long interval of peace in which Israel and Judah were left untroubled, except by the petty nations close about them, there was ample opportunity for an interchange of influences. The earliest Hebrew writings which were preserved in something of their original form in the final Scripture of the Jews, were the stories of the heroes of the period between the partial conquest of Canaan and the founding of the kingdom, familiar to us by the title of "Judges." These tales were freely handled by the later writers who made use of them and set them in a framework of their own, but they retain much of the pristine flavour. Appended to these in the last chapters of the Book of Judges are some later narratives relating to the same period which afford a vivid picture of life in the primitive days when the

"Judges" were supposed to have "judged." A natural sequence to the hero stories were the first accounts of the making of the kings, Saul and David, which form distinct parts of the books bearing the name of Samuel, intermingled with other material of later date.

It was about the middle of the Ninth Century B. C., after the reign of Ahab in the Northern Kingdom, with his alliance with Phœnicia and his conflicts with Syria, in which the weird figures of the prophets Elijah and Elisha appear, and when Jehoshaphat of Judah was a vassal of that kingdom, that the first attempt was made to form a narrative of the events which preceded the conquest of Canaan, covering the escape from Egypt, the struggle through the deserts and the battles by which land was won first east of the Jordan and then between it and the Philistines, extending north to the Phœnician and Syrian borders. Preliminary to this was the effort, common to all ancient peoples in beginning a relation of their history, to account for their origin, which was usually attributed to a mythical ancestry, and even to account for the existence of mankind in general and of the earth itself. Between four and five centuries had then passed since the deliverance from Egypt. There could have been no record of the events, but the space was filled with traditions and memories, some of them embodied by that time in written material. How the people

had come into Egypt and what their previous history had been was probably unknown even then, though there may have been traditions and tales, extending far back to pastoral days before the dark period of servitude. Of the origin of the world and of the human race there could be only mythical accounts, which had to be either borrowed or invented. Of knowledge there was certainly none, and of revelation the only source was the human imagination unguided by science.

What material existed in the form of stories of the patriarchs and myths of the creation and primitive man, and what legends of Moses and Joshua may have been already written down is only a matter of conjecture, but it is well established that a narrative appeared not earlier than the middle of the Ninth Century B. C., which constituted one of the main sources of the books of the Pentateuch and Joshua, and is known to scholars as the Yahwistic source, on account of its common use of the name Yahweh for the deity. This was afterwards retrenched and modified and blended with another document of like character which appeared about a century later, known as the "Elohistic" source, because of its general use of Elohim to designate the deity. The record of which these form the main material underwent expansion and modification afterward, and one of the latest of its parts is the impressive chapter

with which it begins giving an account of the creation.

The earlier of the two main documents referred to above contained the first nucleus of the written law of Israel, which was afterwards developed to constitute one of the main elements of the great epic that was to be completed centuries later. It was a brief codification of what had apparently become the customary requirements and prohibitions of a primitive state of society. It was called the "Book of the Covenant," and was said to have been read by Moses "in the audience of the people" at Mount Sinai, and to have been communicated to him by Yahweh himself on the top of the mountain. More than two centuries after this was embodied in the "Yahwistic source," in the time of the prophet Jeremiah and the reign of Josiah of Judah, nearly a century after the destruction of the Northern Kingdom by Assyria, an event occurred which not only gave a new development to the law, but a new color to all the quasi-historical material in the great epic. That was the discovery in the temple at Jerusalem of a "book of the law," which aimed at a suppression of heathen practices in the worship of Yahweh and the concentration of that worship at the temple in Jerusalem, to counteract the tendency to lapse into "heathenism" which beset the people. It was intended to support the doctrine of the theocracy as

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that had already been developed by the prophets. The substance of this with later additions is contained in the book known as Deuteronomy.

The highest development of the genius of Israel was reached in the prophets, under the stimulus of events which preceded and followed the destruction of Samaria by the Assyrians, B. C. 722, and those which similarly attended the destruction of Jerusalem, 586, B. C., by the Babylonians under Nebuchadrezzar, and the exile of the leading spirits of the Kingdom of Judah to the land of the conquerors. These prophets were the great champions and orators of the theocracy. Some of their productions were undoubtedly delivered orally and addressed to the kings and rulers or to assemblies of the people, and afterwards written down and elaborated by themselves or others. Some were labored compositions, containing highly wrought rhythmical passages and poetical imagery. In their final collection some of them were ill-arranged and sadly marred by excision and interpolation. They contained predictions and warnings, such as other political orators of antiquity were wont to utter, some of which were justified by events while others were not. They are not wholly free from evidence of having been made by copyists and editors to conform to events after these had happened.

The earliest of the Hebrew prophets whose impressive oracles are preserved in the Great Epic

was Amos, that Judahite herdsman who was impelled to go into the Northern Kingdom in the time of Jeroboam II, about 760 B. C., to denounce the iniquities which threatened to bring the wrath of Yahweh upon that land, doomed to destruction less than forty years later. The greatest was Isaiah, who rose at Jerusalem when Samaria was undergoing its final agony and Zion itself was menaced by an Assyrian army under Sennacherib. Other voices were raised during the same period, but under the long reign of Manasseh there was a reaction against the stern theocracy of the prophets, and comparative silence. Then, under Josiah and his successors, when Judah's life was again threatened from the East, appeared Jeremiah to revive with fierce ardour the preaching of submission to the God of Israel and reliance upon his power for the salvation of the nation. But the doom of Judah was not averted. In the exile itself the voice of prophecy was raised by the rivers of Babylon in the oracles of Ezekiel. He spoke in the name of Yahweh but used much imagery and symbolism borrowed from the heathen land. Finally, when Cyrus of Persia vanquished Babylon and permitted the captive Jews to return to their beloved Zion there was an outburst of jubilation from an unknown prophet whose utterances with others of equally unknown origin, became attached to those of Isaiah in the book bearing his name.

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There were "minor prophets" contemporary with these and others of a later date, but this peculiar development of the literary genius of Israel reached its height in these, and overshadowed every other form of expression for more than two centuries. The epic owes more of its greatness to this than to any of its other elements. But other elements were in the making at the same time. The ancient documents relating to the mythical and legendary period before the Kingdom was established were worked over with some infusion of the spirit of the prophets and of the law as it found expression in the Deuteronomic Code. This was the spirit of theocracy, which taught that all trouble or disaster of the nation or the tribes was due to the sins of the people or their rulers in worshipping false gods, or to their neglect of the worship of Yahweh and failure to obey his commands. It is evident that the chief literary treasures of the Northern Kingdom were transferred to Jerusalem on the destruction of Samaria and were there blended with those of Judah in the revision of ancient narratives, including those relating to the period of the Judges and of the first Kings Saul and David.

The first kingdom was established about 1020 B. C. David became King of Judah at Hebron about 1000 B. C., probably as a vassal of the Philistines, and a few years later established himself as the monarch of all Israel at the old Jebu-

site stronghold on Mount Zion, emancipated himself from Philistine subjection and extended the borders of his kingdom by subduing the hostile forces that surrounded it, maintaining amicable relations all the while with Phœnicia. He was succeeded by Solomon about 970 B. C., at the end of whose reign, in 933, the division of the kingdom came. An independent account of Solomon and his reign appeared not long after his death, which became the groundwork of the chapters of the first Book of Kings relating to him. There were annals or "chronicles" of the other kings of both kingdoms, which some believe to have been combined into one great book after the destruction of Samaria and not long before the siege and capture of Jerusalem. This, with the end of the David stories, the account of Solomon's reign and some legends of the prophets Elijah and Elisha, constituted the chief material of the two books of Kings as they were embalmed in the Epic. These were compiled in their earliest form before the fall of Jerusalem and revised during the exile. There was much literary activity among the Jews in that fifty years of expatriation at Babylon, which was regarded as the penalty for recreancy to their God.

Literary activity continued after the return from exile especially in elaborating and putting in final form what had been produced before. This concerned itself largely with what was called "the

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law," which was still attributed to the direct commands of Israel's God through Moses in the wilderness of Sinai. Ezekiel, who was originally a priest, had in his latest oracles, written after the return to Jerusalem was assured, outlined the future state to be established, with Mount Zion and a new temple as its centre, and within this outline was wrought what is designated by scholars as the Law of Holiness. Ezra, another priest, who conducted one of the bodies of returning exiles and took part in re-establishing the worship and settling the ecclesiastical polity at Jerusalem, also drew up a book of the "Law of Moses" which was read to the people. Afterwards, in the priestly circles remaining at Babylon, the body of Levitical law was fully developed, with a quasi-historical framework of its own, and was finally blended with other material in the redaction of the Pentateuch, or five "books of Moses," and the Book of Joshua. This latest code furnished the impressive first chapter of all and supplied modifying traces in Genesis, considerable passages in Exodus, practically all of Leviticus and passages in Numbers. There is little of it in Deuteronomy, but it reappears in material passages in Joshua. Another example of post-exilic literary activity is the entire recasting of past history in the priestly spirit as it appears in the book of Chronicles, divided in modern times, like the Book of Kings, into two.

What may be called the framework of the great epic was wrought out in progressive fashion during a period of five centuries. It presents more clearly than any formal and systematic history the experience and the polity of the peculiar people during a thousand years, escaping as a horde of fugitives from the confines of Egypt, struggling with privation and manifold difficulty through long stretches of desert under a religious leader, fighting or eluding hostile tribes on the way, gaining a foothold on one side of the Jordan and gradually conquering a goodly realm on the other, establishing a kingdom which split asunder, falling under the crushing power of the empires of the east, but clinging to its faith and its traditions until a remnant of exiles restored the ancient fane and built on the ruins of their "sacred nation" a priestly community which imposed its authority and its system of faith upon a large part of the world for many centuries.

Welded upon this framework were varied products of the genius of this people, illustrating its life, illuminating its experience and perpetuating its thought and sentiment. There were proverbs and wise sayings, collected from time to time in the later days and massed in a "book" of such, which has no parallel of its kind. There were hymns and sacred songs, produced at different periods and under varied circumstances of which there is no record, but finally developed and ap-

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plied in the ritual and ceremonial of the temple of Zion. These, gathered in a "book of psalms," are without rival in human literature. There were products of deep meditation upon problems of existence in the sublime poetry of Job and the sombre brooding of Ecclesiastes, or the preacher. There were idyls and stories impressing some lesson of Jewish experience and faith, and when at last the hope of material greatness faded, there were apocalyptic visions of its revival in God's own time, for had he not made a covenant with Israel, the breaking of which was inconceivable to the devout mind of Hebrew seers? With these the massive epic was bound up and sealed as divine by all the authority that could be invoked for it by men who assumed to speak for the dread ruler of the universe, and who persuaded themselves and the world that their voice was his.

III

THE MAKING OF THE EPIC

As already stated, it was after the middle of the ninth century B. C., in the Northern Kingdom, that the narrative appeared known to scholars as the Yahwist Source of the Pentateuch and Joshua, and it had a truly Homeric character. The Elohist source of perhaps a century later used much of the same traditional material; but, so far as preserved, it appears to have begun with the story of Abraham and not of the creation. When the two were blended into one at Jerusalem after the destruction of Samaria, parts of both were sacrificed to the union, but here and there we find parallel and somewhat inconsistent accounts of the same circumstances; and in many places seams and sutures of mixed material are apparent. In the copying and editing that took place after the promulgation, in the latter half of the seventh century B. C., of the law which constituted the original substance of the book that came to be known as Deuteronomy, some touches of the theocratic doctrine then developed by the prophets were impressed upon the narratives.

Still later, in the time of the exile and after the

return of the priests to the new temple at Jerusalem, where these narratives were made the framework of the fully developed law, further changes were made, chiefly by excision and interpolation, but here and there by modified statement to suit the final purpose of redaction. The original narratives ran through the conquest of Canaan, and passages from them appear in the Book of Joshua and the first chapter of Judges, with traces in the second chapter of the latter book; but the five books associated with the name of Moses and making the framework of the law were first consecrated as the true "word of God," the Canon, or rule of life, for surviving Israel. It was that introductory section of the epic which was first translated into Greek at Alexandria in the Third Century, B. C., as the "Book of the Law," and formed the basis of what is called the Septuagint version of the Jewish Scriptures.

In the first of the five books and the first half of the second there is a rich vein of the work of the "Yahwist." It begins with the Adam and Eve and Garden of Eden myth in the second chapter of Genesis, which, with the story of the flood, was derived from Babylonian lore; and it puts in idyllic form stories of the "patriarchs," the putative ancestors of the tribes of Israel. In these we find the source of the doctrine that the possession of the land was derived from a compact between Yahweh and Abraham, and a promise renewed to

Jacob. The stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, of Ishmael as the ancestor of the kindred tribes of Arabia, of Esau as the progenitor of the nearer kin of Edom, and of the daughters of Laban representing the kinship of Syria, are told with a fascinating realism that makes them seem like matters of fact. The pride and glory of the Northern Kingdom to which the original authors of the material belonged, are celebrated in the story of Joseph, while the character of Judah is degraded in the account of his offspring.

Traces of the work of the Elohist do not appear until the fifteenth chapter of Genesis where the account is given of the covenant with Abraham, but from there on it mingles more or less freely with the earlier material and sometimes slightly confuses it. When the priests revised the work to suit their purpose after the exile, they supplied the opening Chapter which contains the impressive description of the creation in six days and the advanced conception of the creator. They interposed the genealogies before and after the flood, confused the account of the flood itself with their amendments, interpolated the covenant with Noah, made circumcision the seal of the covenant with Abraham, gave the ages of most of the characters and introduced numerous modifying passages. The whole first book and part of the second are a treasure house of ancient Hebrew myth, somewhat marred by writers who strove to make them serve

a didactic purpose. The work of the Yahwist continues with a mixture of myth and historic legend in the account of Moses and the escape from Egypt. There is much mingling of the Elohist account in the effort to give it greater fulness, and the material is not always harmonious, but it is mostly vivid. The purpose of embodying the law of the Jews and giving it divine sanction increases in emphasis as the narrative proceeds. There was some nucleus of this in the early documents and Yahweh was represented as fulminating his commands to Moses in clouds and lightning on Mount Sinai, but this was greatly elaborated in the later time after the exile. What is known to the learned as the "priests' code," completed after the exile and later than Ezra and Nehemiah, furnished several whole chapters of the latter part of Exodus, practically all of Leviticus, and considerable passages in Numbers and Joshua.

All laws wherever promulgated, and whatever their character, were put in the form of commands of Israel's God "by the mouth of Moses." This began with the earliest brief code established in the time of the Yahwist and embodied in his narrative, was continued with that said to have been discovered in the temple under Josiah two centuries later, which was put in the form of regular discourses of Moses, and was made still more emphatic in the "priests' code" and the narratives

that first accompanied it, which were welded into the Pentateuch in its final form.

After "The Law," or the "Books of Moses," had been canonized and put beyond further change, another collection was consecrated and made the second great section of the epic under the name of the "prophets." This included Joshua and Judges and the so-called historical books of Samuel and Kings, as well as the oracles known as prophecies which have personal names attached to them. This also was wrought over during the exile and put in final form after the return of the priests and scribes to Jerusalem. The material of Joshua was similar to that of the Pentateuch and it contains some of the oldest and some of the latest of its elements. The basis of the Book of Judges, after the first two chapters, was the old hero stories, beginning with that of Ehud the Benjamite, who assassinated the fat king of Moab, and ending with Samson who brought the temple of Dagon down upon his own head in revenge upon the Philistines, with a later appendix on the migration of the Danites and the war of the other tribes upon Benjamin.

Here we have the very oldest of the written literature of Israel that was preserved, with the exception of some fragments referred to in the previous chapter. It has the crude simplicity and naturalism of other primitive writings and gives

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some graphic pictures of life in the days when there was no king in Israel and every man did that which was good in his own eyes. In the subsequent editing, after the Deuteronomic law was promulgated and the theocratic doctrine of human government was developed, these tales, with slight references to intermediate rulers, were framed in a sort of pragmatism that is easily recognised and separated from the stories. Such religious character as they originally had was of the pristine kind, mythological in quality, but now they were turned to account to illustrate the doctrine that all calamities or defeats of the people were due to their sins, which consisted chiefly in neglecting the worship of Yahweh and going after other gods, or disobeying his commands, and that their deliverance must come from repentance and a return to fidelity to him and dependence upon him. The later redactors in the post-exilic time did not avoid confusing the narratives with mixed material here and there, as in the account of Gideon's conflict with the Midianites and that of the Benjamite war. One effect of the revisions was to represent these casual heroes as a succession of rulers for terms of years, which in point of fact they were not. The original stories, like the best material of the Pentateuch and Joshua, were Ephraimite, and they contain scarcely a reference to Judah. Some critics credit the basis of these tales to the Yahwist and Elohist "documents."

The material of the book, or books, of Samuel is of various dates and is irregularly pieced together and not made to harmonise completely. The earliest and least sophisticated is that relating to David's reign in the second book, and next to that come the stories of David in his relation to Saul and his life as a freebooter in the mountains of Judah and a vassal of one of the Philistine kings. Next comes the more friendly account of Saul, and latest the stories of Samuel and Saul which show the prophet and king at enmity with each other and represent the setting up of the kingdom as reluctantly assented to by "the Lord" and his prophet. These latter originated two or three centuries after the events to which they relate and cannot be considered at all as historical. The element of theocratic pragmatism is introduced in all the late material.

The two books of Kings do not constitute a history of the kingdoms, but after the account of Solomon's reign, derived from a pre-existing "book of the Acts of Solomon," it is largely an argument in support of the theocratic doctrine. That makes it more fitting as part of the great national epic than any dry chronicle of events would be. It had purpose and colour and was compiled with a view to edification for the future rather than information of the past. The first compiler was deeply imbued with the doctrine of the Deuteronomic Code, that all worship was to

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be centralised at Jerusalem in strict observance of the law, that the unpardonable sin of Jeroboam, in which he "caused Israel to sin" and brought calamity on the nation, was the setting up of places of worship at Bethel and Dan, and that all use of shrines and images on the hilltops, or "high places," after the ancient manner, as well as wandering after other gods, was infidelity to Yahweh, which would bring punishment upon the nation. He was also imbued with the theocratic spirit of the prophets, which taught that the nation was the special care of "the Lord," Yahweh, who punished it by permitting its enemies to harry and plunder it, and would destroy it by bringing powerful foes upon it from the East if it persisted in disobedience and unfaithfulness; but who would rescue and save it whenever it repented and returned to its true allegiance. But he would in any case bring a purified remnant out of its tribulation to restore the Kingdom of David, which should abide forever and bring all the earth under its sway.

The compilation was made from material drawn from the chronicles or annals of the kingdoms, Ephraimite legends of prophets and sketches of wars with Syria, and was directed in a way to serve the dominant purpose of the compiler. It seems to have been completed in its earliest form before the "captivity," but it was extended and revised during the exile and received touches from a

final redactor before it was embalmed in the epic.

The oracles of the great prophets before Ezekiel and of those "minor prophets" who preceded the destruction of Jerusalem appear to have been carried to Babylon by devout exiles with considerable confusion of manuscripts, partly arranged and edited there, and completed after the return. They were put together in considerable disorder, and later oracles were added to them or interpolated in them before the second section of the epic designated as "the prophets" was canonised, sealed against further change and attached to "the Law" in the Greek version of the Scriptures. Isaiah suffered most from the rude editing. The genuine material, whether written by the prophet or recorded by faithful scribes, was ill-arranged, and both older and later oracles were interpolated between its parts or attached to its close. The last twenty-seven chapters, as they stand in modern versions, are much later than the rest, part belonging to the time of release from captivity and part to a still later day. Jeremiah was less marred in the make-up and Ezekiel scarcely at all, but there is some mixing of material of minor prophets after the exile. Notwithstanding the unskilful handling of this material, in consequence of the lack of systematic records and of the historical or critical sense, it forms the loftiest part of the great epic.

To the Scriptures as thus constituted, after the

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restoration of the temple and the establishment of the priestly commonwealth of the Jews, was added a third section before the epic was closed. This fluctuated for a time and the Christian era opened before it was finally determined by the canon of Jewish authorities what books were sacred and what were secular. It was too late to destroy literature that was not to be deemed sacred, and it was only rejected and stamped as "apocrypha." Some of this was not inferior to some that was accepted, but it was not so essential to the completeness of the work that was to illustrate the life and character of ancient Israel and carry its influence to future generations.

This third and last section to be welded into the epic was called simply "the writings," or in Greek the "sacred writings," and in modern versions of the Jewish Scriptures it is interpolated in the middle of that originally called "the prophets," between the legendary and quasi-historical books and those deemed genuine prophetic oracles. One of these "writings," however, the Book of Daniel, came to be classed among the prophets, and another, that of Lamentations, was mistakenly attached to Jeremiah, as utterances of the prophet, and though afterwards detached from the book it holds its place next to it in the arrangement. One of those always classed among the "minor prophets" is not a "prophecy," but an illustrative story in

which one of the old prophets, Jonah, the son of Amittai, figures. Another of "the writings," the beautiful idyl of Ruth, which originated after the restoration of the temple as an appeal against the cruel edict of the priests separating the faithful from their alien wives, was attached to the Book of Judges, merely because it related back to the same heroic age; and, though again detached, it still holds its place after that book.

For the rest, this section of the epic now begins with the quasi-historical books of Chronicles and Ezra and Nehemiah which follow the books of Kings. Ezra and Nehemiah, once treated as a single book, relate to the return from exile, the restoration of the temple and its worship, the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, and the promulgation of the law in the form in which it was brought back from the priestly circles at Babylon before the completion of the Levitical system. The book was compiled a century or two after the events to which it relates from material that consisted in part of veritable memoirs of Ezra, who had brought back a detachment of the exiles, and of Nehemiah, who had been commissioned by the Persian King Artaxerxes to rebuild the walls of Zion. It exhibits the lack of orderly arrangement and of literary skill characteristic of the editing of the time, but is one of the most truly historical parts of the epic. The compiler was no doubt the author of the book of

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Chronicles, now divided into two books, and a priest ardently devoted to the new modes of worship at the temple. His own book is made up of genealogies from the time of Adam to David; and from the establishment of the monarchy it is a recasting of the history of Judah, with incidental reference to Israel, covering the same period as the books of Kings. It transforms this history in the spirit of the priestly system of the author's day, which he zealously attributes to David, the founder of the dynasty now considered a sacred memory and the basis of a hope of greatness yet to be realised.

The other books are not arranged on any principle; but, as each is an independent element of the epic, it has no strictly logical place. One of these was the collection of proverbs and wise sayings variously gathered together during the centuries, but commonly attributed to Solomon, who was represented as a paragon of knowledge and wisdom by the chroniclers of Judah. Several collections of psalms and sacred songs had been made and these were massed together and labeled with the revered name of David. A few of these were old, but the greater part originated after the exile and were connected with the temple service. No element of the great epic reaches a loftier height of grandeur and sublimity than the dramatic poem of Job, and nothing in human literature surpasses it in those qualities.

Three more "books" came within the canon after much questioning and hesitation in the centuries of doubt, when others were being gradually relegated to the limbo of apocrypha. Esther, which powerfully embodies the pride and arrogance of the Jewish race, in spite of adversity and humiliation, probably owed its admission to its supposed explanation of the origin of the feast of Purim. The gloomy and sceptical philosophy of the greater part of Ecclesiastes, which was a late post-exilic production, long excluded it, and it was finally saved by association with the name of Solomon and by its "conclusion of the whole matter," appended by a later hand than that of the original author, that fear of God and keeping his commandments was the "whole duty of man," and that God would "bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's," was rescued from oblivion and stuck as a glittering jewel upon the completed work, upon an unfounded assumption that it really was Solomon's, and by an interpretation that made it symbolise the love of God for his people, which had as much ground as the later interpretation which twisted it into a symbol of "Christ's love for the Church." It is a charming idyl of purely human and earthly love, probably wrought from the wedding songs of the Judean days after the exile, and gives a glimpse of the side of life in

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those days that relieves the gloom and solemnity with which it is apt to be too closely associated in the modern mind.

Properly considered the Book of Daniel closes the epic. It relates to the desperate struggle of the Jewish nation for renewed life against the oppression of Syria, and prefigures its short-lived triumph. Though its visions of that triumph, which was to result in an "everlasting kingdom" and the subjection of all other "dominions," were doomed to sink under the eclipse of the Roman power, it was interpreted anew when the darkness fell, as foreshadowing the Messianic time, when God's Anointed would surely reign in glory, and all the nations of the earth would be brought under his sway or be destroyed. Then would all his saints be redeemed from tribulation and their enemies brought to shame and everlasting contempt, even to "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth."

Thus we have the early myths and legends of Israel, the outlines of its history for a thousand years, the development of its laws and its ethical ideas, its conceptions of deity and its religious faith, its wisdom and philosophy, its highest poetry and its exalted prophecy, wrought by the concurrent and consecutive efforts of its own genius during the latter half of that eventful millenium into one great work of literature, which has been regarded as a sacred heritage by a large

part of mankind ever since. It is a human work in the sense that all the history and literature of mankind are human work, and divine only as all that is wrought through man for the elevation and progress of the race may be regarded as divine. It is open to the study of man as all the work of God and man is open to his study, with the freedom of thought and reason with which man is endowed by his maker. It is only by breaking the seal of peculiar sanctity and exclusiveness which Jewish priests and rabbis imposed upon it two thousand years ago, that the interest of men at this day can be revived in its contents, and a living benefit can be again derived from its lessons. With this in mind we will now try to get a fuller and clearer view of what it contains.

IV

THE MYTHS OF ISRAEL

To understand properly the contents of this greatest of all epics we need to divest our minds from inherited and inculcated preconceptions which would deprive the Hebrew genius of all credit for its greatest work, its only great literary work. This genius was different in kind and in degree from that of other peoples of the same era of human development, but it worked in an equally human way. At the first awakening of its powers it was occupied with memories of the past, the deeds of heroes and the struggles for national existence. Then it began to think, to imagine, to speculate upon its ancestry, upon the origin of its race, the origin of other races, of all mankind, of the earth and the heavens, and upon the powers of Nature and the one all-embracing power behind the seen and the unseen.

The Hebrews of that age had no science and little knowledge of nature or of mankind beyond their own observation. The critical and analytical faculties were little developed and had little to work upon. They had no reasoned philosophy or capacity for forming one, but they had awe in

the presence of nature, vivid imagination and uncurbed credulity. Hence their speculations on the origin of things took the form of myths, created by a poetic imagination, but accepted for truth as readily as are the results of research in these modern days.

The epic opens, as we have seen, with an account of the creation, prefixed to it at a late day and derived from Babylon in the time of the exile. It is much loftier in conception than what follows it, which is five centuries older. The old myth of the creation was of Chaldean origin and appears to have been curtailed when this prelude was prefixed to it, but enough of it remains to show that it did not represent the earth as emerging from a waste of waters, but as being itself an arid waste, waiting for the mist to rise and the rain to fall. The story of the creation of man and woman and their environment in the garden also had its germ in Chaldean lore, but it bears the true impress of Hebrew genius in its doctrine of human life as a fall from the favour of God and a struggle for the grace of an alienated and resentful deity, who had been disobeyed in the very infancy of mankind. The God of these early myths is created in the image of man, a high ideal for the time of its conception, but it is crude according to any rational estimate of modern times. He fashions man from clay and woman from his rib, and breathes life into them; he walks in the

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garden, asks questions and gives commands, and he drives the disobedient pair from paradise into a lonely world, which speedily appears nevertheless to be old and occupied, and he soon decides his first experiment to have been a failure and destroys all but one family with a flood of waters and starts anew with the human race, but with little greater success. The story of the deluge, as well as that of the Garden of Eden found its suggestion in Chaldean mythology.

Incongruity soon appears in this story of the beginning of the race on account of the diversity of material of which it is composed. The ancient fragment which gives the descent of Lamech from Cain came from an author who knew nothing of the cutting off of the race by a flood of waters, for Lamech, who in other material is made the father of Noah, begets children who are the progenitors of those who invented the arts and crafts of the writer's time. The genealogy which makes Lamech descend from Seth in seven generations, instead of from Cain in five, and makes him the father of Noah, is one of the interpolations from the post-exilic priestly writing, by which also the Yahwist's account of the flood is somewhat confused in the final redaction. It is the same priestly writer of a late day that devised the covenant with Noah of which the rainbow was to be the token. There is an ancient fragment which makes Canaan, instead of Ham, the son of Noah upon whom the

curse of subjection is pronounced, and another that accounts for the dispersion of mankind by the confusion of tongues when the audacious attempt was made to reach heaven with a tower, instead of by the division of the family of Noah, whose descendants had the names of places and tribes known in the time of the writer who described the "generations" of the Sons of Noah. The formal genealogy of the line of Shem, like that of the line of Seth to Noah, is an interpolation from the priest's writing after the exile.

These preliminary myths, leading to the appearance of Abram, or Abraham, as the ancestor of Israel, are crude, but they are intended to exalt the Hebrew race above the rest of mankind and they serve that purpose effectively. There is more skill displayed in the series of ethnic myths embodied in the stories of the patriarchs, and they are less marred by mixture of material and the meddling of late scribes. Here the peculiar genius of the writer known as the Yahwist appears at its best.

The earliest time to which these myths can be traced was four or five centuries after the supposed deliverance from Egyptian bondage under Moses and the struggles through the deserts to the "promised land." It was nearly a century and a half after the setting up of the Kingdom of Saul, and many years after its division on the death of Solomon into two, the stronger of which ar-

rogated to itself the ancient title of "Israel," while the other had to be content with the name of the single "tribe" of Judah. There were a number of territorial names, supposed to have originated with separate tribes or clans, and there were traditions of others that had disappeared, by which the number of twelve, sacred in Babylonian lore, was established. It was a tendency of primitive peoples to personify their country, with the name of a common ancestor, and its divisions, with the names of his offspring, and these names had usually a real or supposed significance that led to the invention of stories explaining their origin. Israel, interpreted as meaning "Warrior of God," was probably adopted in the time of conflict and struggle, when Yahweh was a "God of battles," and it is found in an Egyptian inscription of about the time of the invasion of Canaan. The poetical name for the country, "Jacob," meant "heel," or one who supplanted another by placing his heel upon him, and it probably had its origin in song when the "Children of Israel" put the tribes of Canaan under their feet and took possession of their land.

Abram, meaning "Exalted father," or Abraham, "The father of many," according to the popular etymology, appears in old inscriptions as a personal name, but its significance suggests that it had its Hebrew application in the mythical explanation of the ancestry of peoples,

and it was claimed as an ancestral name by all the Semitic tribes of the West, though Israel made it peculiarly its own. Israel's early writers took pride in deriving its ancestry from the ancient empire of Babylonia, or Chaldea, and brought their "Abram" from one of its chief capitals, Uru, or "Ur of the Chaldees," with kinsmen who became progenitors of other nations akin to Israel. Canaan had been won by bloody conquest and trampling upon its original inhabitants, but possession was to be justified and sanctified by a promise to Abram, whose name was then changed to Abraham, and to his descendants, and by a solemn covenant between him and his god, who was to be the god of all his posterity.

This posterity the deity would multiply and make his peculiar care until in it all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Intermediate between the Chaldean progenitor and the supplanter, whose sons were to be the fathers of all the twelve tribes, a link was interposed with a name of cheerful omen, "Isaac" or "laughter," associated with the ancient fane nearest to Egypt, that of Beersheba. He was sanctified as a special gift of God by being made the offspring of his parents when they were old and when the mother had been previously barren all her life. Precedence in point of time, in accordance with historic fact, was given to kindred tribes of Arabia, but they were made the offspring of an Egyptian slave in

the service of Abram and Sarai,—not yet transformed to Abraham and Sarah,—in the person of Ishmael, in whom was personified the character of a people whose hand was against all others. Other tribes of inferior rank were credited to Abraham by a second marriage.

The personality of Isaac is not clearly defined, but it is different with that of Rebekah through whom the relation of Israel to Syria and to Edom is portrayed. Nahor, the name of a place in Mesopotamia, is made the brother of Abram; and to his granddaughter, Rebekah, Isaac is married, Abraham sending a servant of Damascene origin to bring her. Haran was also the name of a place, but it was made a brother of Abram who had died in the land of the "Chaldees," but through whose son, Lot, the Ammonites and Moabites were to be accounted for.

Edom was older than Israel and closely allied in blood, and there had been rivalry between them in the early days of the kingdom, which, before the time of the Yahwist writer, had resulted in Israel gaining the upper hand in its own territory. In the myth of Isaac and Rebekah, Esau representing Edom, and Israel, under the name of Jacob, were twins. Esau was the first-born, but was supplanted by his brother. The story, as we have it, is of mixed material and has two different accounts of the manner in which Jacob secured the precedence over Esau. His name is explained by his

grasping his brother by the heel at birth and according to one account he craftily buys the birth-right with a mess of pottage, and according to the other secures his ascendancy by the wily trick, to which his Syrian mother incites him, of obtaining the blessing of his blind father which was intended for the first-born.

Israel's supremacy by divine favour and human duplicity being thus established, the kinship with Syria is made more prominent by Jacob being sent thither to marry a daughter of Laban, his mother's brother. Syria's duplicity appears in the trick by which Laban imposes upon Jacob first the elder and less attractive daughter, whom he did not desire, and making him serve a second seven years for Rachel, the younger; but Jacob shows his superiority in craft by contriving to get into his own possession the bulk of Laban's property. The relative position of the tribes is most skilfully illustrated in the birth of Jacob's children by the two wives and their two handmaidens, and there is nothing in all literature that surpasses in compactness and vividness the manner in which national characteristics are embodied in Esau, Laban and Jacob. The traits personified in the last named by the genius of the authors of these myths persisted throughout the history of Israel and are a heritage of the Jews to this day.

The point of view of the writers to whom we owe these graphic pictures of Israel's mythical

origin was that of the Northern Kingdom, to which they belonged and which they magnified over Judah. This accounts for the character of the stories of the Sons of Jacob. The Judahite writer who after the destruction of Samaria blended their narratives into one, and the subsequent scribes who copied and revised the work, did not efface or seriously mar this character, which so glorified Joseph at the expense of his brethren. The name Joseph implied separation and was given to all that territory which had broken away from Judah after the death of Solomon. Its dominant domain was Ephraim, which Judahite writers were wont to use as a designation of the whole kingdom called by its own subjects "Israel," and the next in rank was Manasseh, mainly on account of its territorial extent. Those two were regarded as the sons of Joseph, whose name loomed above all others in the family of Jacob.

According to tradition the oldest of the tribes was Reuben, which settled permanently on the East side of the Jordan and in some unexplained way had committed outrage upon the family and had disappeared as a distinct territorial designation. It is referred to disparagingly in that oldest of Israel's heroic ballads, the "Song of Deborah," and there is a poetical allusion to its national offence in the so-called "Blessing of Jacob." By the same figure of speech it is embodied in a brief statement in the Yahwist narrative. Reuben is

made the first-born of Leah. There was another tribe that had been associated in tradition with Judah in the far south under the name of Simeon but had faded out. It was made the second son of Leah. There had been a class of wandering priests or ministers of worship in the primitive times known as Levites, and though they had no territory or inheritance of their own in the kingdom, they were exalted into a tribe as the Sons of Levi, the third son of Leah. Judah, which was a kingdom by itself, was given the place of fourth son of Jacob and Leah.

Meantime no offspring was vouchsafed to Rachel. Four of the tribes or districts of minor rank were assigned to Jacob's paternity by handmaids of his two wives, the names being explained by circumstances of their birth, or rather of their conception. First, the handmaid of Rachel gave birth to Dan and Naphtali and then that of Leah to Gad and Asher. Two other tribes were granted the maternity of Leah, Issachar and Zebulun. Leah also had a daughter, Dinah, who served the sole purpose of accounting for an apparently unprovoked attack which, according to tradition, Simeon and Levi had made upon Shechem. Shechem, as well as the Israelite clans, was personified in the story. At last the beloved Rachel was blessed with a son, that Joseph who was so glorified as the saviour of the family. After that, Jacob left Laban with his wives and children

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and the flocks and herds he had acquired in "serving" his father-in-law. In the brief account of the parting the political relation of Israel and Syria is symbolised and incidentally that of Israel with the brother nation of Edom. The craft of Jacob appears in contrast with the relative obtuseness and gullibility of Laban, and his cringing timidity compares unfavourably with the frankness and courage of Esau; but national characteristics are exhibited with unshrinking candour. Finally, on the journey through the heritage of Israel Rachel dies in giving birth to Jacob's youngest son, the little but warlike tribe of Benjamin, which furnished the first king of Israel.

This manner of accounting for the nation and the different tribes or divisions of which it had at one time or another been composed, is in the true spirit and manner of old mythologies, but it has a vivid realism peculiar to the Hebrew genius. It is followed, after a genealogy of the family of Esau, or the "generations" of Edom,—mainly a late interpolation,—by the remarkable glorification of the Northern Kingdom at the expense of Judah embodied in the story of Joseph and his brethren, which also serves to account, in a manner to cover the humiliation, for the falling into servitude in Egypt. That this should have been preserved with so little defacement by the Judean writers who blended the original material and afterwards revised and completed the narratives,

seems strange, and still more so that they should have interposed between the account of selling Joseph into Egypt and his rise to greatness there, the old story about Judah and his children which was obviously intended to cast obloquy on the royal line of that kingdom.

In any other literature the mythical character of what we have been considering would be taken for granted. There were attempts by various peoples in ancient times both before and after the age of Israel's literary development to account for the origin of the world and the human race, and various mythical accounts of the birth and growth of nations. There were personifications of places and of tribes and nations with names of imaginary ancestors and founders, and the chief peculiarity of those of the Hebrews is their close connection with the development of a religious system of a high order, which took a hold upon mankind and maintained it for centuries, moulding human faith upon enduring lines.

The ancient poem introduced into one of the old narratives which were blended in the Book of Genesis, known as "Jacob's Blessing" of his sons, affords a striking illustration of the use of these personal names as applied to the so-called tribes of Israel. This antedates the Yahwist narrative and must have been written before the division of the kingdom on the death of Solomon. In spite of its strong personifications, its reference to

divisions of the people rather than to individual persons is quite obvious. It is inconceivable as the utterance of a dying patriarch speaking of his living sons, and comprehensible only as a poetical description of the characteristics of the several tribes or sections, when the sceptre was held by Judah after a conflict with enemies, while Joseph was a flourishing region. The historic degradation of the oldest tribe for its obscure dereliction is referred to. The next two are condemned for violence, in apparent allusion to the attack upon Shechem, mythically figured in the story of Dinah. They were to be scattered in Israel, as Simeon and Levi had disappeared as separate tribes, and Levi was evidently not then regarded as the father of the priesthood. There is no reference to Ephraim and Manasseh, but in the narrative just preceding the poem they had received a blessing which gave Ephraim precedence, though Manasseh was the elder. Benjamin, who in the story is depicted as a beloved child, is likened in the poem to a ravaging wolf, in allusion to predatory exploits of the tribe.

There is a much later poem personifying the tribes, known as the "Blessing of Moses" for the children of Israel, which was introduced into the Book of Deuteronomy. This distinctly originated in the Northern Kingdom some time after the division, when it was strongly conscious of its own pre-eminence. It has a prayer that Reuben

may yet survive, but it ignores the existence of Simeon. By this time Levi is recognised as the father of the priesthood and without tribal relation. Judah is referred to slightly as the one that is separated from his people. Benjamin is the beloved of the Lord, but a lavish wealth of blessing is bestowed upon Joseph, and his division into Ephraim and Manasseh is recognised. As in the other poem the reference to the other Sons of Jacob imply tribal or territorial characteristics.

There is another significant use of these personal names for tribes or clans in a fragment of the Yahwist narrative which is included in the beginning of the Book of Judges, where "the Lord," that is, the God Yahweh, is represented as saying that Judah should go up first to fight against the Canaanites, and Judah says to Simeon his brother "Come up with me into my lot that we may fight against the Canaanites and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him." This throws an unmistakable light upon the manner of personifying the clans of Israel and the process of evolving from their names and relationship the stories of the patriarch and his ancestors and his sons.

Having thus considered the character and purpose of these ethnic myths, we are better prepared to bestow a glance upon the manner in which they are used in the composite narratives, from the ap-

pearance of Abram, or Abraham, to the death of Jacob, whose sons were kept in Egypt. Abram is called by "the Lord"—this phrase is commonly used in our English version for the name Yahweh—out of "Ur of the Chaldees," with his brother and the son of a deceased brother, and, after sojourning for a time in Haran for the propagation of the Syrian branch of the family by his brother, he is made to traverse the land to be consecrated as the heritage of his descendants, and to go down into Egypt in a time of famine to demonstrate the care of "the Lord" over him and over his wife's chastity. Then is presented the episode of the separation from him of his nephew Lot, who was to become the progenitor of the Ammonites and Moabites, these being degraded as the offspring of drunkenness and incest. Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain of Jordan, while Abram remained in the land of Canaan, with his tent at the Oak of Mamre.

It was one of the latest revisers of those old tales who took occasion here to introduce the account of the invasion of the Jordan plain from the east, in which Abram appears as a warrior chieftain to rescue Lot from his captors and do homage to the King of Salem (peace) and priest of God Most High. There may have been some old tradition to found it upon, but it is plainly a work of the imagination, and is quite incongruous with what precedes and follows it.

Although the description of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the escape of Lot and the birth of Moab and Ammon in the mountain, might naturally be expected to come in here, it is preceded by a somewhat lurid account of the solemn promise of God to Abram, in which the hand of the Elohistic writer is discerned for the first time, and which was elaborated by a late redactor. Here also appears the Yahwist version, somewhat modified by later hands, of the birth of Ishmael, child of the Egyptian handmaid Hagar, and their expulsion from the family by the jealousy of Sarai. What follows that, as a formal account of the covenant between God and Abram of which circumcision is made the token, and of the change of names to Abraham and Sarah, with the first version of the promise of the birth of Isaac, is from the pen of the post-exilic writer who made these narratives the prelude and framework of the elaborate system known as the Priests' Code.

In the story of the iniquity of Sodom and Gomorrah, the destruction of the cities and the escape of Lot, which follows after this interruption, there is an interesting view of the Yahwist's conception of deity, in harmony with that which appears in the story of the Garden of Eden. Yahweh appears in the guise of a man with two attendants, and holds familiar converse with Abraham, has a mild controversy with him, and makes the promise of the birth of a son, which causes

the amusement that explains the name of Isaac. The whole episode, is in the alluring manner of this greatest of primitive writers and was not marred by later editing.

The Elohist writer, whose work was woven more or less closely with that of the Yahwist from here on, had an account of an experience of Abraham and Sarah with Abimelech, King of Gerar, which was a variant of the Yahwist's account of the experience of Abram and Sarai in Egypt. Notwithstanding the similarity, this is also preserved in the narrative, while, later on, a similar experience of Isaac and Rebekah with this King of Gerar is drawn from the Yahwist source, revealing the confusion caused by making from variants of the same mythical story different experiences of characters represented to be real. After the statements regarding the birth of Isaac the Elohist's version of the ejection of Hagar and Ishmael is introduced, which is not made wholly consistent with that of the earlier writer. From the same source is the account of the "Offering of Isaac," which may be taken not only as exhibiting the obedience and faith of Abraham, but as symbolising the substitution of animal for human sacrifice. The prosaic account of the death and burial of Sarah is an interpolation of the priestly writers after the exile.

The story of the wooing of Rebekah by proxy and the marriage of Isaac is a charming passage

from the epic genius known as the Yahwist. That of the birth of Esau and Jacob and the supplanting of the first-born by the second-born twin is somewhat confused by a mixture of material from the two sources, and imperfect efforts to blend it harmoniously. Close analysis has been made, but it is not necessary to our purpose. It was the Elohist who made Esau a red and hairy man, and the Yahwist who made the father blind. The latter never attempts to disguise the craft or duplicity of his characters. There is a similar mingling of material in the account of Jacob's migration to Syria, his relations with Laban, the birth of his children, and his encounter with his brother of Edom on his return to Canaan. Upon the mythical character and significance of these incidents there is no further occasion to enlarge. Considering the time and manner of their production, centuries after the supposed events, to argue for their reality as history is to indulge in nonsense.

The same is true of the delightful story of Joseph and his brethren, which is also somewhat marred by an imperfect blending of material. The most picturesque, pathetic and lifelike touches are always those of that unknown Homer of the Hebrews called the Yahwist or Jehovist. That writer lived at the time when the Kingdom of that part of Israel known as Joseph, or as Ephraim and Manasseh, was at its highest estate, while Judah, after the death of Solomon and before the

time of Hezekiah, was in eclipse. The pride and sense of superiority of the northern kingdom crops out at many points in spite of the privilege which Judean writers exercised so freely of editing its literature after the kingdom was destroyed. This sense of superiority was exemplified at a much later time in the reply of King Jehoash to Amaziah of Judah when he proposed an alliance. "The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon saying, 'Give thy daughter to my son to wife'; and there passed a wild beast that was in Lebanon and trod down the thistle."

The Yahwist writer appeared but two generations or so after the return of Jeroboam from his sojourn in Egypt, to become the first king of Israel and to lord it over Judah. It was in that interval that the myths arose regarding the title to the land of Canaan, the origin of the tribes of Israel in the Sons of Jacob, and the reasons for going down to Egypt to fall into galling servitude. What companions Jeroboam had in Egypt, what lore he may have brought from there, we do not know, but there is evidence, even in the unfriendly record, that he was a man of great ability and was treated with consideration by the reigning Pharaoh. It is probable that out of that sojourn grew the first accounts of the deliverance and suggestions for the story of Joseph's glory and greatness and the humiliation of his brethren. It is certain that there could be nothing historical in the

accounts of what preceded the servitude, and even those of the escape, so long before they appeared, could be nothing else than legendary, with mythical elaboration. When for ages there are no written records, tradition may carry through memory from generation to generation the main outline of events and the chief features of great characters, but only imagination can supply details and furnish thought and language to the departed actors; and whatever is above the range of common human experience comes necessarily from invention.

The account of the exodus from Egypt is hardly less mythical than that of the origin of the tribes and their title to the land which they wrested by barbarous warfare from the Canaanites. How could it be otherwise after the lapse of nearly five centuries between the event and the earliest written material of the narratives which were afterwards woven together and elaborated to form the framework of the latest development of the law, in the time of the priests who restored the worship at Jerusalem after the exile? During that eventful period there had been a change of language and the adoption of writing from Phœnicia, and no inscriptions or authentic memorials reaching back of the kings have ever been discovered. Considering that the name Moses virtually meant deliverer, or one that draws out, even the personality for which it stands recedes into the realm of myth, though there must have been a potent and resolute

leader to take the "mixed multitude" from the borders of Egypt through the perils and trials of the wilderness to the Jordan Valley, an achievement which according to tradition had occupied forty years. If there was such a period, the actual incidents of the prolonged experience are unrecorded and the character of the condensed story marks it as in the main fictitious.

This is necessarily so of such happenings as the birth of Moses, his meeting with the God Yahweh at Mount Horeb, when the deity was revealed in fire in a bush that was not consumed, and his personal converse with that divinity, who had discovered the oppression of his people in Egypt and determined to bring them out with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, of the miraculous but cruel afflictions visited upon the Egyptians, to humiliate their stubborn ruler and demonstrate the might and implacable vengeance of Israel's God, of the crossing of the Red Sea and the fulmination of divine commands from Mount Sinai, the later name for Horeb, and of the incidents of the long journey with their supernatural accompaniments. To argue for the reality of these things is to renounce the benefit of all modern knowledge and discard the function of reason which men have been training in these later centuries.

It is sufficient to consider the reality of the deity as conceived of by the earliest writers of Israel, when it came to a struggle or a conflict

with the enemies of their people. This God, who had promised to his own peculiar people a land occupied by others, to be seized by the ruthless extermination of its inhabitants, was pictured as lying in wait in his mountain fastness until the cry of his oppressed people reached him, and then rescuing them by an exhibition of terror and cruelty which would be universally denounced as barbarous if it came within the compass of any human despot and was exercised by him to accomplish his purpose. To say nothing of the other plagues, the slaughter of the first-born of all the families of Egypt is a horror compared with which the equally mythical massacre by Herod of the children of Bethlehem sinks into insignificance. Was it a real deity who counselled the spoiling of the Egyptians, who broke out in fiery wrath when his people complained and had to be remonstrated with by his servant to prevent him from killing them, who did kill thousands of them by sending fiery serpents and famine and pestilence among them as a penalty for disobedience, and who descended upon a mountain top in clouds and darkness and revealed his presence in lightning and thunder, declaring that he would break through all bounds and destroy the people if they attempted to "gaze upon the Lord?"

Was it not rather the conception of a rude age and the creation of a vivid imagination, to impress the people with awe and give a tremendous sanc-

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tion to the rules of conduct and the worship demanded of them by their leaders and teachers? It does not follow that there was deliberate or conscious invention or intent to deceive, any more than in the case of the mythology of Egypt or Chaldea, of Greece and Rome or of Mediæval Europe. The writers may have thought their imagination to be the inspiration of their God and believed what they wrote or said to be true, for they did not distinguish thought from knowledge where real knowledge was unattainable. There may have been traces of tradition upon which to string the narratives that run through the books of Exodus and of Numbers but in the main they are mythical, the imagining of poetic genius. Their vivid realism and the insistent claim of a divine origin have long imposed upon a credulous world.

These narratives are of a composite character throughout. Passages have been identified by the learned as from the Yahwist document, others from the Elohist and more from the blend produced from these by later writers. There are interpolations by the priestly writers of the exile and after, including most of the elaboration of the law in the later chapters of Exodus, practically all of Leviticus and a considerable part of Numbers. Deuteronomy is to be considered as a separate production. The mythical element runs into the account of the conquest in

the Book of Joshua, and the legends that follow are not wholly free from it. The Book of Exodus, as far as the lurid description of Mount Sinai and the fulmination of the law, is for the most part from the composite production of the so-called Yahwist and Elohist as combined or blended at a later time and finally edited after the exile. The scraps of genealogy and the instructions for the observance of the passover are interpolations from the late priestly writings, and the account of the feeding upon manna before the mountain is reached is elaborated from the same source. The triumphal song after crossing the Red Sea is generally believed by scholars to have been included in one of the ancient documents; but some, in view of the reference immediately afterwards to the Song of Miriam, of which only a fragment is preserved, regard it as a later interpolation. The battle with Amalek at the end of chapter xvii, the wise counsel of Moses's father-in-law in chapter xxviii, and the description of the scene on Mount Sinai in chapter xix, are ascribed to the Elohist. The version of the passage generally known as the Ten Commandments, introduced immediately after the description, is probably a late recension. The real purpose of the scene was apparently to introduce what is designated as the "Book of the Covenant," beginning at xx, 22, and extending to xxiii, 19. This was incorporated in one of the older documents, but was sub-

sequently modified to some extent. The narrative is resumed after that, where it contains the statement that Moses went up on the mountain with Aaron and Abihu and came down to tell the people "all the words of the Lord" and to write them down. This is interrupted by a diverse and much later account of Moses going up with Joshua and waiting six days for an interview with "the Lord" and remaining on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

The next six chapters, containing the directions for constructing the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, &c., are unquestionably post-exilic, belonging to what the scholars call the "Priests' Code," as are the subsequent chapters telling how the instructions were executed. The absurdity of supposing that anything like this was actually done in the Wilderness of Sinai is sufficiently obvious, but the purpose was to give an ancient and divine sanction to the ceremonial devices of the second temple. Between these two descriptions of the trappings of the temple prototype there is another composite passage of peculiar interest. It begins with the account of the making of the golden calf, which was intended at the time of its production by the Elohist writer as a lesson and a warning to those of the Northern Kingdom who were enticed to heathenism by the symbols set up by Jeroboam I for the worship at Bethel and Dan. It had been previously represented in the narrative that "the

Lord " promised to give Moses two tables of stone upon which he had written " the law and the commandment." Now it is said that Moses after dissuading " the Lord " from destroying the people in the heat of passion came down with the two tables of stone written on both sides by God himself, broke all the commandments in anger at what met his view by throwing them down, and burnt and ground to powder an image made of gold, or perhaps of gilded wood. After the wrath of " the Lord " has been appeased by the slaughter of about three thousand men and he had renewed his promise and his threat, Moses was directed to hew two new tables of stone and take them up the mountain for the Lord to write upon. This he did, and, after a parley with the Lord, certain distinct covenants were uttered and Moses was directed to write them down; and after again being with the Lord forty days and forty nights he " wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments," manifestly meaning the words that had then been given him. This is what the ancient writers meant by the ten commandments, and what we call the decalogue was a later production, of which there was more than one version. The description of Moses coming down from the mountain with a shining face and having to put on a veil when speaking to the congregation " is from the late material of the post-exilic priests.

From the same source is all the elaboration of the law, the commands, the observances of sacrifice and worship that follow in Leviticus and Numbers. The more or less mythical narratives of the irregular march through "the wilderness," that is, the deserts of Arabia, are resumed near the end of chapter x of the latter book, and we get the mixture of ancient material again, with here and there intimations of still older poetic sources. Here is the original account of the feeding on manna and the miraculous supply of quails with which the people were sickened of their complaining by being smitten with a "very great plague." Here also we find the story of Miriam stricken with leprosy because she and Aaron remonstrated with Moses for marrying a Cushite woman. There is the same conception of deity as a jealous being, quickly provoked to wrath, fierce in anger, vengeful toward those who disobeyed him and toward the enemies of his people, but easily mollified by evidences of repentance and submission,—surely not a real divinity according to any rational conception now possible, but the product of the imagination in a primitive time, like other ancient gods.

The descriptions of the experience on that memorable but unremembered journey must in all reason and conscience be regarded as mythical or as fictitious. There are evidences here and there of inventions for a specific purpose, as in the latest

material of the mixed account of the insurrection against the authority of Moses and Aaron under the leadership of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Tradition of some such incident appears in the older narrative, but it was turned to account by the latest revisers to establish the authority of the priesthood in the family of Aaron and consecrate the distinction between priests and Levites, which never existed before the exile. In connection with this also there is an exhibition of that ruthless wrath which characterised the God Yahweh in those troublous times.

There is relief in the more truly mythical episodes, like that of the attempt of the King of Moab to repel the horde that was invading his kingdom by getting the prophet Balaam to curse it. There are two accounts of this, one from the Yahwist and the other from the Elohist, which are imperfectly harmonised by the compiler who adopted both. The turning of the intended curse to a blessing seems in the two accounts to be a variation of poetic material from a common source, much older than either of them. The picture of Israel that it presents could hardly have been drawn after the division of the first kingdom and could not be earlier than the triumph of David and the preparation for the glory of Solomon.

The enumeration of the people, the establishment of the law of inheritance and the various ordinances regarding sacrifices and offerings, to-

gether with the allotment of tribes in the promised land and the review of the various stages of the journey, in short, practically all of the Book of Numbers after the Balaam episode came from the late material of the priestly writers. The main substance of the Book of Deuteronomy is a version of the law discovered in the time of Josiah of Judah, with introductory discourses of later origin attributed to Moses, and some additions and variations. Near to its close is the poetical production known as the "Song of Moses" which probably had its origin in the time of the exile, and the so-called "Blessing of Moses," which is much older and has been already sufficiently considered. The book ends with the account of the death of Moses before the invasion of Canaan. This is a comparatively late addition to the older narratives. The leadership passed to Joshua with the necessary divine sanction, and his name was connected with the book which gives an account of the conquest, as that of Moses was associated with all that preceded it, when the mass of Epic literature was finally compacted.

The mythical element strongly asserts itself in the material of Joshua derived from the Yahwist and the Elohist sources, as a considerable part of it was. This appears as clearly in the story of crossing the Jordan as in that of crossing the Red Sea, and is plain enough in that of the

siege and capture of Jericho. It is unmistakable in the account of Joshua's battles, the first failure at Ai on account of the sin of Achan, and the triumph after the offender had been stoned to death; the wily proceeding of the emissaries of Gibeon whereby certain cities were saved from destruction, and, according to later revisers of the material, the subjection of Canaanites to menial service was justified; the league of the five kings of the Amorites and their fate, and the subjection of King Jabin of Hazor and his allies.

The systematic account of the extermination of the inhabitants and devastation of the towns of various sections of the land, and the allotment to the different tribes of Israel, is of later production and fictitious rather than mythical. It was intended to prefigure the restoration of the inheritance after the return from exile. Most of this material was derived from the framework of the "Priests' Code" in post-exilic days. The account of Joshua's farewell address in chapter xxiii is, however, older, and his rehearsing of past events before the tribes gathered at Shechem, and his urgent warning against idolatry, is ascribed by the learned to the Elohistic writer, who lived and wrote in the anxious days of Jeroboam II, when the warning was most needed. The last trace of these distinctly mythological productions is found at the beginning of the Book of Judges.

V

HEROIC AND HISTORIC LEGENDS

ONE of the most interesting portions of the Hebrew epic is that which covers the legendary period between the conquest of Canaan and the establishment of the monarchy. Much that is legendary is mingled with the mythical and with a later fictitious element, in the account of the conquest itself, and the character of Joshua is hardly more real than that of Moses or Aaron. But traditions of the time when there was no King in Israel and heroes arose to lead the people to battle when beset by enemies, came nearer to the light of history, and the original form of the stories of these champions and their exploits were probably written down earlier than any of the other narratives or perhaps anything in the whole composite work, except a few ancient fragments. The pristine flavour was preserved through all the processes of compilation, revision and redaction.

But the period was a long one, of two centuries or more, and one of obscure transition, with scattered and unorganised tribes slowly gaining their ascendancy and imperfectly coalescing. Few were the events preserved in memory to furnish mate-

rial for the first writers, more than a century after the latest of these events were passed. It was an age of relative barbarism, of low conceptions of deity and humanity and of the relations of men to each other and to their gods. The champions who arose in time of trouble became rulers only locally and temporarily, when they became such at all, and the title by which they were known is imperfectly rendered in English by the word "Judges." In what is called the Book of Judges we must distinguish that which covers these legends of heroes, contained in the chapters from the third to the sixteenth, and the later appendix of five chapters relating to the migration of the Danites and to the war upon Benjamin.

These legends first appeared in written form sometime after the division into two kingdoms and in that known as Israel, or Ephraim, which held that of Judah almost in contempt, notwithstanding the achievements of David and Solomon. When they were afterwards compiled into a continuous narrative there was an attempt to fill the gaps with the names of other "judges" than the heroes of these tales, but there were scarcely any exploits remembered with which to credit them. We are told of a Shamgar who saved Israel by smiting six hundred Philistines with an ox goad, and of others who had thirty sons that rode on asses' colts or thirty sons and thirty daughters, these apparently being symbolical expressions

for the domain they ruled. Still later, when this literature passed into the possession of Judah, after the destruction of Samaria, and when the theocratic doctrine was developed, which attributed all trouble or calamity to the anger of "the Lord" when his people sinned or provoked his jealousy by wandering after other gods, and credited every deliverance or triumph to his favour after the people repented or had been duly chastised, there was a revision which introduced this doctrine as an explanation of the events. In this process there was some mutilation of the narratives, and in some cases there is evidence of interpolation or the blending of more than one version of the same episode.

In the final redaction of the "book" after the exile a summary account of the conquest was prefixed to it, which is believed to have come from the Yahwist document, of which so much use had been made in the preceding books, and the occupation of the land of Canaan was made to follow the death of Joshua instead of being achieved by him, and to be an imperfect conquest instead of a complete one. This prefix with the exception of the opening clause, which places the conquest after the death of Joshua had evidently been adopted by the theocratic compiler, for the latter part of it is interlarded with his general explanation of how the Lord delivered the people into the hands of spoilers when they went "lusting" after other

gods, and raised up "judges" to rescue them when his compassion was excited by their groaning under oppression. He also explains that the other tribes, or "nations," were left among them for the purpose of testing, or "proving," them and finding out whether they could be made to obey the commandments of the Lord, "which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses." It is he who gives the first example of oppression by the King of Mesopotamia and of the rescue by Othniel, and preludes the story of Ehud and the fat King of Moab with his customary explanation of the occasion for it; but it is a late editor, or redactor, who supplies the chronological scheme of forty year or twenty year or eighty year periods. This was based upon an artificial manner of reckoning by generations and making twelve generations from the exodus to the completion of the temple.

It is with Ehud that the genuine legends begin. His barbaric act of duplicity and assassination is related with a certain gusto, and the summoning of the men of Ephraim to take the fords of the Jordan against the Moabites sums up in a few words the whole conflict. The statement of the slaughter of ten thousand and the subduing of Moab so that Israel had rest for eighty years is one of the characteristic additions of the later editors. Brief and graphic also is the account of the conflict of the northern tribes with Sisera, under

the clarion call of Deborah the prophetess and with the aid of Jael, the wife of the peaceful Kenite. The preservation of the antique and mutilated song of victory suggests the source of the prose narrative. There is a glimpse of the terror of those early days of Shamgar, the son of Anath, and of the awe excited by the coming of storms which were the war chariot of the God of Israel as he swept over the mountains of Seir to the rescue of his people. "And the land had rest forty years."

The mythical element is conspicuous in the story of the choosing of Gideon of the clan of Abiezer in Manasseh to repel an invasion of Midianites, who were eating up the land like a swarm of locusts. Back of it are the relics of a tale of blood-avenging in which Gideon's clan alone was concerned, on account of the killing of his brothers by two Midianite Chiefs, whom he captured and slew with his three hundred men; but these relics are overlaid with an account of a general slaughter of a multitude of Midianites, with the forces summoned from all Manasseh and the neighbouring tribes, reduced to these three hundred chosen warriors of Abiezer. The appearance of the God Yahweh in the guise of his "messenger," or "the angel of the Lord," is in the manner of similar appearances to Abram at the oaks of Mamre and to other "patriarchs of the infant world." The incidents attending this apparition,

the mode of reducing the fighting force to three hundred and the manner of the battle with the Midianite horde which threw it into panic and self-slaughter by a demonstration of torches and broken pitchers, are distinctly mythical in character. Like the fall of the walls of Jericho at the blowing of rams' horns, they are intended to enforce the idea that when Israel triumphs it is the act of his God and not of his men. Still, there is no reason to doubt that there was behind the elaborate story a genuine tradition of a Midianite invasion and the rising of Gideon to lead the battle against it.

It was a natural impulse of the people to desire to make a permanent ruler of Gideon, who had not only repelled their enemies but destroyed the altar of Baal and set up the worship of Yahweh-Shalom at Ophrah, with such an image as was later forbidden in "the law." It was a late editor of the account that made this a "snare" to him and his house. The original writer saw no offence in it. The pristine account of the manner in which the son of Gideon and a concubine undertook to set up a kingdom for himself at Shechem and was brought to grief, is but slightly marred by subsequent editing and is a vivid picture of the time.

The tale of Jephthah, the outlaw of Gilead, who was called upon to repel the Ammonites on the other side of the Jordan has a prelude from a

later hand than that of the original writer, and is broken by the interpolation of a long message from Jephthah to the King of Ammon, resenting the claim of that potentate to the land which he had invaded, and defining the jurisdiction of Yahweh and Chemosh. It need not be said that no such message could have been conveyed and preserved for several centuries, but it could easily be injected into the story of a later time, as it undoubtedly was. In the touching episode of Jephthah's daughter there is a reminder of days when a vow to Yahweh might mean a human sacrifice.

The compiler who put Shamger after Ehud and Tola and Jair after Abimelech as "judges" of Israel, interposed three successive rulers of whom nothing seems to have been known except the number of their sons and daughters or grandsons, between Jephthah and Samson. There is myth again in the account of the birth of the Danite hero, similar to that in the story of the birth of Isaac, and later of that of Samuel, and there is myth in his exploits, derived rather from Phœnician or Philistine than Hebrew sources, for it is related to Hercules and to sun worship, however remotely. But it is told in such a simple matter-of-fact and diverting way that it seems like an impertinence to subject it to critical analysis. It is neither matter of fact nor matter of history, but what actuality may have been back of it we can never find out. We may be sure, however,

that this picture book giant of the border of Philistia and Judah did not "judge Israel twenty years," and the author of the picturesque tale never said that he did. That was the assumption of a redactor. The minor and barely mentioned judges seem to have been interposed to make up the number twelve.

It was a later writer who told how the Danites marched in a body from the borders of Philistia to the North, smote a "quiet and serene" and unsuspecting people with the edge of the sword, burnt their town and took possession of their land, stealing a priest of Yahweh and the trappings of his worship on the way, wherewith to set up the sanctuary that subsequently existed at Dan. This is chiefly interesting for the glimpse it gives of the Yahweh worship of the time and the spirit which accompanied it.

The gruesome tale of the Levite of Bethlehem-Judah and his concubine, the outrage upon whom at Gibeah led to the fratricidal war that nearly destroyed Benjamin, exhibits a state of manners in the midst of Israel such as was imputed to Sodom in another tale which originated at about the same time. Perhaps the Sodom and Gomorrah story was intended as a warning against such things as were tolerated at Gibeah and at a later time were disclosed even at Jerusalem. Other evidence of this Benjamite war does not exist, and the explanation of its cause may be

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mythical, but the accounts reflect a time which history could not depict with the same truthful colouring. Two accounts of the actual battles at Gibeah are so blended as to confuse the effect at some points, and two explanations of the manner of providing the surviving sons of Benjamin with Israelite wives are imperfectly reconciled; but this is of little moment compared with the calm assumption that the ruthless slaughter of women and children in such contests was an accepted thing.

Legendary episodes in the life of Israel are not confined to the period of the so-called judges nor is the story of them limited to the book that bears that title. The Book of Samuel, divided into two in the Greek version and in all modern versions, was compiled from a variety of material and more than once revised before its character was fixed beyond further change. Some of the learned critics find in this and in the stories of the Judges traces of both of those old documents, the Yahwist and Elohist narratives, as an underlying stratum; but in the main that to which the name of Samuel is attached was made up from separate accounts of the "seer," or prophet, and his relation to the first king, of Saul in his relation to David, and of the exploits of David before he became a king. The varied material underwent several processes of compilation and recension, and the story of the birth and childhood of Samuel

which forms a prelude to the book was one of its latest parts. Much older is the account which follows it of a calamitous conflict with the Philistines in which "the ark of God" was captured. This represents Israel as being at that time subject to the Philistines and as fighting against its subjection, and the compiler of the book interjects the statement on the death of Eli that he had "judged Israel forty years," implying that he had been the ruler of the people at Shiloh, as other "judges" had been at other places. The probability is that he had only been looked up to and consulted as a priest, exercising such rule as existed in that region at the time.

There is something hardly short of grotesque in the account of the use of the "ark of the covenant of the Lord" as a help in battle and an object of terror to the enemy, its capture by the Philistines, its malignity in afflicting its captors, their relief by sending it back to Israel with placatory offerings, and its deadly spite when some of its own devotees ventured to look into it. It need not be said that such accounts, wherever found, are not history but myth or perverted legend, intended to convey a lesson. Doubtless this story was introduced here by the compiler as an explanation of the end of the rule of the priests of Shiloh and an introduction to the part taken by Samuel in setting up the first king; and it was to lead up to it that the later matter was prefixed, relating

to the birth of Samuel, the sins of the sons of Eli and the doom of his house, and the revealing of "the word of the Lord" to Samuel at Shiloh, after which he was "established to be a prophet of the Lord."

It was the theocratic compiler of these legends in the latter days of the kingdom, probably the same who had put together those of the "Judges," who introduced the warning of Samuel to the people gathered at Mizpah against the enticements of alien gods, and made offerings to "the Lord" for them, which resulted in their deliverance from the Philistines. Though this writer says that the latter were "subdued" and "came no more within the border of Israel," and that Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life, this interlude is followed by a series of narratives drawn from different sources and inconsistent with each other, which represent Samuel's function as quite other than that of a "Judge of Israel" all his life, and the Philistines as persistent and troublesome enemies of Israel all through the reign of Saul and into that of David.

The main purpose of the first Book of Samuel was to give an account of the setting up of the kingdom under Saul of Benjamin and its "establishment" under David of Judah. In its compilation three main sources were used and imperfectly blended, with fragments here and there from others and interjections by the compilers and

later editors in the effort to harmonise the incongruous material and to impress the lesson of Yahweh's supremacy in the rule of Israel. Two of these sources were relatively ancient, probably originating soon after the time of Solomon and less than a century after the time when Saul was made king, one of them devoted to an account of Saul and his exploits and the other to David and his relation to Saul while the latter was king. Some learned authorities regard these as one, but they have diversities that distinguish them, as regarding character and events from different points of view. The other main source is much later, originating in the troublous times of Jeroboam II of Israel and Azariah, or Uzziah, of Judah, and being devoted chiefly to the relations of Samuel and Saul. After such an interval of time this was almost of necessity a work of the imagination making free use of older material and adapting it to the writer's pragmatic purpose. Imagination, or the mythical element, must necessarily enter into such narratives, treating of events long past which survive only in the memory of successive generations. Sufficient evidence of this is to be found in the detailed reports of familiar talk, not only between men, but between men and the deity, which could not have been literally transmitted even if they had been real.

There are three diverse accounts of how Saul came to be made king. According to the oldest

of these this goodly young man, the son of a mighty man of valour, Kish of Gibeah in Benjamin, was searching for stray asses what time "the Lord" had confided to Samuel,—"told Samuel in his ear" is the homely phrase of the "authorised version"—that he was sending this young man to him to be anointed as captain over his people to save them "out of the hand of the Philistines," for he had "looked upon" them because their cry was come unto him. It was the Lord who determined to set up a king for Israel out of the goodness of his heart and who picked out Saul for the place. Samuel anointed him and gave him benign instructions which caused the spirit of the Lord to come upon him and led to an episode which gave rise to the proverbial query "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Meantime the stray asses were miraculously brought home. This account is in the simple manner of primitive story.

There is another of doubtful origin and uncertain date which represents Saul as having been "raised up" after the manner of the "judges" when King Nahash of the Ammonites made an attack upon Jabesh-Gilead where Jephthah had before been the champion against the same enemies. When the men of Jabesh-Gilead got a respite from Nahash and sent word throughout Israel for help and the message reached Saul while he was following the oxen in Gibeah, the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him as it had come upon Jeph-

thah and Gideon and Samson, and he became the rescuer of the people. In gratitude they insisted upon making him king at the ancient sanctuary of Gilgal.

The beginning of the third account of making Saul ruler over Israel, drawn from the latest of the sources, is placed before that in which the Lord had singled him out and sent him to Samuel to be anointed. It represents the Elders of Israel as going to Samuel at Ramah, when he was old and had made his sons "judges over Israel" and they had turned from his ways and perverted judgment, and demanded that he set a king over them that they might be ruled like other nations. This not only displeased Samuel but displeased the Lord; and, although he yielded to the importunity, he instructed the prophet to warn the people of the consequences. This account is continued after that which represents Samuel as anointing Saul at Ramah and sending him to join a band of prophets going up to Bethel. It says that Samuel called the people together at Mizpah and after rebuking them for rejecting their God, selected a king for them by a process of elimination in the old manner of consulting the Lord. Saul was expecting no such honor and when it came upon him "hid himself among the stuff." Then follows the account of the war against Nabal and Saul's appearance as a hero acclaimed by the people.

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The later writers who had a hand in this composite narrative were intent upon explaining how it happened that Saul's reign was a failure and he had to be set aside in favour of David. This had necessarily to be attributed to the displeasure of the deity, and the latest of the accounts in the hands of the compiler and subsequent revisers of his work began by making the demand for a King an offence to the Lord. Further on it imputes to Saul a serious fault in failing to obey literally a command of "the Lord of hosts" utterly to exterminate the Amalekites and destroy all they had. Although there appears to have been plenty of Amalekites in the time of David, Saul is said to have utterly destroyed them with the edge of the sword, except their King Agag, whom he brought away as a captive. He also saved some of the best of the cattle as spoils of war. For his offence Samuel fiercely condemned him as rejecting the Lord, and declared that the Lord rejected him and would rend the kingdom away from him and give it to a better man. Thereupon the aged prophet in his wrath slew Agag, the last surviving Amalekite, with his own hand and went home to Ramah, while Saul "went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul."

The final editor in his effort to reconcile these accounts interpolated in the oldest a direction by Samuel to Saul to go down to Gilgal and wait seven days for him to come and offer sacrifices.

Then at the end of the Nahash episode he made Samuel lead the people down to Gilgal to "renew the Kingdom" and there they "made Saul King before the Lord," offered sacrifices and "rejoiced greatly." By still another interpolation further on he represents Saul as still waiting the seven days for Samuel at Gilgal and, when the time was up, making the sacrifices himself, thereby incurring the anger of the prophet and forfeiting the favour of "the Lord." This is made the cause of the breach between the prophet and the king and the occasion for declaring that the Lord had "sought him a man after his own heart" and "appointed him to be prince over his people" because, in the language of Samuel, "thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee," and thereupon "Samuel arose and gat him up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin."

It is evident that the effort to reconcile these accounts was not successful, and that the explanation of the loss of the kingdom by the Benjamite hero was duplicated in an inconsistent manner. But there is much disorder in the use of the material in the whole narrative. Immediately after the account of the defeat of the Ammonites there is a passage which begins with a plea of Samuel to the people that he has grown old and has given them a king, and that he has never oppressed or defrauded them. This agrees with the idea that appears once or twice elsewhere that Samuel

after the death of Eli had acted as a "judge" in the old manner. He recalls to them the past dealings of the Lord with his people and warns them and their king not to rebel against him. Finally he calls upon the Lord to make a demonstration of his power in thunder and rain, which immediately follows. The prophet takes leave with a promise to pray for them and instruct them in the right way, and a warning that if they did wickedly both they and their king would be consumed. Parts of this passage savour of that theocratic compiler who put together the stories of the judges in a manner to illustrate the ways of Israel's God. While the language is all put in the mouth of Samuel it refers to him in one place in the third person as among those whom the Lord in the past had sent to deliver them from their enemies "on every hand."

Following this is an account, in the manner of the oldest source of the material, broken by one of the redactor's interpolations, of a contest of Saul and his son Jonathan, who appears suddenly as a full grown warrior, against the Philistines. It is followed by a summary statement of his victories over these and other enemies, in which he "did valiantly." Among other he "smote the Amalekites and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them." After a slight genealogical statement it is said that there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul, and when he

saw any mighty man he took him. This would seem like a winding up of his career, but it is immediately after that the late story of the loss of the kingdom by failing to destroy the last of the Amalekites and all they had is interposed. After that David makes his first appearance on the scene, but Saul does not leave the stage. A new source of the original material appears here, that which is mainly devoted to David's relation to Saul and Jonathan, but the other continues to mingle with it.

By way of introducing the series of events in which Saul and David both appear, the later writer who strove to get the narratives into a continuous and consistent form, gives his own account of the first anointing of David at his father's home in Bethlehem by Samuel, who has two or three times already appeared to be vanishing. It was then considered necessary to have the prophet anoint the future king and founder of a great dynasty, under the direction of the Lord. With the new material we are told of the evil spirit that came upon Saul when the spirit of the Lord had departed from him, and of the coming of David to soothe him by playing upon the harp. The shepherd lad is here spoken of as already a mighty man of valour and a man of war, as well as cunning in playing the harp, prudent in speech and comely in person.

But the account of the war with the Philistines in which Goliath of Gath appears as a champion

and is slain by David with a sling is mostly from the later source. It is marred and confused in the editing and a number of verses, as it is divided in English versions, are not in the Greek text. It is purely legendary matter. It may be noted that, notwithstanding the previous statement that David was brought to Saul as a skilful player of the harp and was made his armour-bearer, this Goliath story is made the occasion of his first meeting with the king. Even in that an inconsistency appears, for he is called to Saul and has a colloquy with him before entering upon his exploit with the sling, and yet after it is over the king inquires who he is and has him brought to him as a stranger. In spite of its defects of composition the story is one of the classic episodes of the great epic.

In the account of Saul's growing jealousy of David, the affectionate relation of the latter with the king's son, the peril of the youth of Bethlehem, his fleeing to Samuel at Ramah and being harboured by the priests of Nob, there is a perplexing mixture of material and occasional inconsistencies of detail, but this does not prevent its having a sustained interest, while the stories of David's adventures as an outlaw in the mountains of Judah are vivid and picturesque. These are partly from that older source which deals chiefly with the relation of David and Saul and partly from the later one that treats of the relation of Saul and Samuel.

There is an instructive duplication which well illustrates the form in which different versions of the same incident appear and are treated as if relating to separate events. It was the later source that told of David's taking refuge in the cave of Adullam and drawing lawless men to him. It was the older that told of his going with his men to the rescue of Keilah from the Philistines and of the betrayal to Saul of his subsequent whereabouts by the Ziphites. According to this latter, while Saul is hunting him in the mountains he has the king's life in his hands but spares it out of magnanimity or regard for "the Lord's Anointed." He lets the king know of this, remonstrates with him and gets his avowal of repentance and promise of immunity in return for assurance that when David becomes king he will spare the house of Saul from destruction. From the same source is the picturesque and diverting account of marauding in the South, with the death of the foolish Nabal and the captivating of his wife, and then from the later source is the duplicate version of the incident of sparing the king's life in the wilderness of Ziph. The details as related are quite different but the event is the same.

Finally David, still distrusting the purpose of Saul toward him, boldly takes refuge with the chief enemies of his country, the Philistines, and makes friends with one of their five princes, Achish of Gath, who allowed him the city of

Ziklag for his own. This, which was no doubt a historic fact, led to a previous reference to his having fled alone to the same potentate and, not being kindly received, playing the madman to escape harm. There is no reason for accepting that as authentic. From here on to the death of Saul and Jonathan the material is practically all from the earlier source and may be taken as substantially historical, at least so far as concerns the battle with the Philistines and its result. It is not unlikely that David set out, with the favour of Achish, to accompany the Philistine prince to the battle and was turned back by the objection of the others, taking the opportunity for freebooting raids in the opposite direction. But the details of what passed, including the visit of the king to the woman of Endor who had a familiar spirit, are necessarily of a legendary character as there could have been no record or exact memory of them.

The woman of Endor story is out of its proper place and should come after the account of the gathering of the Philistines at Aphek and David's revenge upon the Amalekites for burning his town of Ziklag in his absence, and just before that of the disastrous battle on Mount Gilboa. It is interesting as a picture of the superstition of the time when "the Lord" was supposed to reveal his will by dreams or by Urim or by inspiration of prophets, and wizards and "familiar spirits" were believed in. It also gives a glimpse of the

notion that the dead dwelt in a state of inanition in the underworld, from which they might be aroused by the summons of wandering spirits.

The last intrusion of the late writer of what is sometimes called the "Saul and Samuel source" appears in connection with David's receiving the news of the death of Saul and Jonathan in the battle with the Philistines, when the men of Jabesh-Gilead remembered their gratitude for the deliverance from Nahash, King of the Ammonites. The older writer had said that when Saul's armour-bearer refused to kill him to save him from the dishonour of death by the uncircumcised, he had fallen upon his own sword. The later writer makes an Amalekite fleeing from the field of battle report to David that he had slain the king and brought his crown and bracelet to "my Lord," whereupon the Lord's anointed caused one of his young men to kill the messenger of evil. It may be noted here that at a later time, after David had been made King of Judah at Hebron and two officers of Ish-bosheth, the Son of Saul, thought to win his favour by bringing him the head of the heir of the former King of Israel, he is represented as saying, "when one told me saying, 'Behold, Saul is dead,' thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him and slew him in Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him for his tidings." Whereupon he administered the same reward to them.

That the lament of David at the death of Saul and Jonathan, one of the finest specimens of antique poesy, is a genuine production, there is no sufficient reason to doubt, though it is doubted by some critics, but when it was written or where it was written we have no means of knowing. We are told that "he bade them" to teach it to the children of Judah, but that it was written in the Book of Jasher, which was probably compiled late in the reign of Solomon.

The material of these narratives which relates especially to David and Saul often represents David as "inquiring of the Lord" in the old manner of using the ephod and urim and thummim, a rude mechanism for obtaining aleatory answers to direct questions. By this means he is said now to have obtained sanction for his purpose of going up to Hebron, where the "men of Judah" came and "anointed him King over the house of Judah." The narrator knew nothing of the mythical anointing by Samuel at Bethlehem long before. His account is older than that story and nearer to historical truth.

One needs only to read the accounts of the reign of Saul and the adventures of David before he becomes king, with care and with freedom from prepossessions, to see that they are largely legendary and partly mythical, which thorough investigation proves them to be, but they may nevertheless represent with substantial truth the

main historical facts. In days of little writing and of reading confined to those who possessed the sparse copies of manuscript scrolls, oral tradition was carried through successive generations and words were remembered and repeated in a way which would seem marvellous in modern times. Yet it was even then far easier to imagine details than to remember them, and there was no scruple in setting down as fact what was assumed but not known to be so. In legendary and mythical history the incredible is no more to be accepted as fact in the language of the Hebrews and the literature that they deemed sacred than in that of other ancient peoples. Still, the mythical and the legendary in their great epic picture their life and character in the early days in vivid colours more truthful perhaps than colourless history.

VI

DAVID AND SOLOMON

WHILE Saul was nominally the first king of all Israel, it is evident from the disordered and unsystematic, but picturesque, accounts of his reign that he had no organised government, and his rule differed little from that of the old *sofetim*, or "judges," except in its continuity, which may have been due to an almost continuous conflict with surrounding enemies. He had no palace or capital, but seems to have dwelt at his old home in Gibeah when not engaged in the field of war. He is represented in one of the later accounts,—when he charged his son with being in league with the Son of Jesse to depose him, and accused his followers of conspiring against him, and when he passed sentence of death upon the priests of Nob for harbouring David,—as "sitting in Gibeah under a tamarisk tree in Ramah with his spear in his hand," while all his servants were standing about him. This appears to have been his royal state when he had occasion to hold council or pass judgment. Heroic as he may have been, his rule came in a time of great difficulty, when it is doubtful if any man could have succeeded in establishing

the kingdom on a firm basis. He was beset with enemies, suspicious of his surroundings, "perplexed in the extreme," and he proved unequal to the task set for him. Writers of a later time were bound to explain his failure on the ground that he had offended the God of Israel and disobeyed his commands. Otherwise, in their view, he could not have failed.

Saul established no dynasty, and dying on the battle field with his heroic son, the beloved friend of David, left but a feeble heir in Ish-bosheth, or Is-baal, who had little loyal support. The way was prepared for David, and he had the qualities necessary to take full advantage of the situation and make his way to triumph. The writers who could see nothing but divine disappointment and anger in the failure of Saul attributed the success of David to divine favour. He had been taken from the sheepcote by Yahweh himself to be a prince over his people Israel, and a prophet had been specially sent to anoint him at the home of his father, the shepherd of Bethlehem, before he was known as a warrior and a mighty man of valour, which he afterwards became. The passage in the seventh chapter of Second Samuel, which contains the promise by the mouth of Nathan, the prophet, that the throne of his kingdom should be established forever, was from the pen of that compiler of the ancient material who was imbued with the theocratic doctrine of the prophets, and

of the law as promulgated in the days of Josiah, when the perpetuity of the house of David was an article of faith in the divine rule at Jerusalem. The invocation to the "Lord God" when David "went in and sat before him" is from the same source.

David, like many another in human history, was the man for the time, fitted by natural endowment and training for his task, and he established a nation, and with his son and successor organised a government that endured for several centuries, until overwhelmed by the irresistible empire of the East. His dynasty continued unbroken throughout the history of the Kingdom of Judah, and was regarded as so divine that it must surely be revived and restored, bring all the scattered tribes of Israel together again, destroy their enemies and establish an everlasting reign of righteousness and peace on Mount Zion. This belief was the root of the doctrine of the Messiah, or anointed one of the house of David, which played such a part in human history at a later day.

But what we have to do with now is not the actual history of David or his dynasty, but the story of his reign as it appears in the great epic of his people. Largely legendary as the accounts of his previous life may be, it is plain that he had gone through a training that was essential to his task. He had experience as a warrior in Saul's battles with the Philistines more disciplinary

than killing giants with pebble stones and with divine aid. The jealousy of the king, which his success and popularity inflamed into wrath and a determination to compass his death, the shifts to which he was put to save himself and win support from his tribe, his adventures as an outlaw in the fastnesses of the mountains of Judah, his winning the favour and protection of a Philistine prince, even his ruthless exploits in raiding the traditional enemies of Israel in the South while pretending to prey upon his own people, were part of his preparation for the kingdom. When he distributed the spoils of his brigandage among the elders of Judah from Bethel to Ramoth of the South, he was paving the way to the throne at Hebron, which was the stepping stone to the stronghold of the Jebusites on Mount Zion, where the monarchy of all Israel was established seven years later.

That David had the qualities of a great leader his success sufficiently demonstrates, and the qualities were those necessary for the leadership of his people in that day and generation. He was clearly a man of unusual personal attraction, that subtle influence known as magnetism in men, of craft and duplicity, even ruthless cruelty when occasion required, and yet capable of lofty sentiment and deep emotion. Religious after the manner of his time, devout in his belief in Israel's God, he was subject to the moral weakness of an ardent

nature and capable of meanness in the satisfaction of his desires, as exemplified in the dastardly treatment of his heroic and faithful Hittite officer, Uriah, and ready to sacrifice the interests of his kingdom to his yearning love for his reprobate son Absalom, from which he was saved only by the brutal fidelity of that harsh and cruel but shrewd and far-seeing soldier, Joab, who, according to the genealogies of the Book of Chronicles, was the son of his father's sister Zeruiah.

The account of David's reign, like those which precede it, is of a composite character, but a long section of it is from a source nearer to the time and more harmonious and truly historical than those relating to his earlier exploits. The narrative of the conflict with the house of Saul and the winning of the other tribes to the throne of Judah, of which the craft and valour of Joab were the chief instrument, is derived, with some late interpolations and amendments, from the same source that dealt mainly with David's previous adventures in his relations with Saul. This is interrupted where it is said that all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and reminded him that the Lord had said in the time of Saul that he was to be "prince over Israel." The earlier and more historical source first appears in the statement, immediately following, that "all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron and King David made a covenant with them in

Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David King over Israel." The late reviser and editor of the narratives interposed here the statement that David was thirty years old when he began to reign and that he reigned seven years and six months over Judah at Hebron and thirty years over all Israel and Judah at Jerusalem; but the other continues with the capture of Jerusalem from the Jebusites and the building of David's stronghold there with the aid of Hiram of Tyre.

For several chapters of the second book of Samuel, from the beginning of the sixth to the twenty-second verse of the twentieth, omitting the seventh and eighth, the story of the reign is continuous and little marred by subsequent revision or editing. The seventh chapter is that which contains the promise of the perpetuity of the Kingdom of David, by the word of the Lord that came to Nathan in the night, and the King's invocation of gratitude, as conceived by the theocratic writer more than three centuries after the time. The eighth is an interpolated recapitulation of victories over hostile nations on all sides, when the Lord gave victory to David wherever he went, and a summary statement of his government and his chief officers.

Leaving out these, we have first in chapter vi the account of the transporting of the "ark of God" from the house of Aminadab in the hill to a tabernacle, or tent, at Jerusalem, which is much

in the same spirit as that of its capture and return by the Philistines in the days of Eli the priest of Shiloh. This depository of divinity exhibits the same malignant spite as before in slaying the well-meaning Uzziah for presuming to touch it when it appeared to be in danger of falling from the cart as the oxen stumbled. This so frightened David that he left it to bless the house of Obed-Edom, a Philistine, for three months before completing the journey with a form of rejoicing that disgusted that wife of his who was a daughter of Saul. For her derision she was made childless the rest of her days. There was doubtless a historical incident behind this strange tale, but in form and substance it must be regarded as mythical.

The passage that begins with chapter ix has every appearance of historical truth, at least in substance, and is marvellous in its graphic simplicity and absolute candour of portrayal. It reveals a barbaric time and in many ways a barbarous spirit, and shows David to be a rare embodiment of the spirit of his time. There is no concealment or glossing over or extenuation of his faults, but in spite of them he was beloved of God and man and was the glory of his time and race, so potent is success due to personal qualities and favouring circumstances to exalt a human being in the esteem of his fellow men. He showed his magnanimity in care for the crippled son of Jonathan. He

sought to show kindness to the young King of Ammon and when his overtures were rebuffed with insult he waged relentless war upon the Ammonites and upon the Syrians allied with them. The doughty Joab was the real commander in these wars of David, though ever ready to yield the glory of victory to his King.

It was during this conflict on the other side of the Jordan that the outrage upon the faithful Hittite officer Uriah was perpetrated, and the prophet Nathan with his parable of the little ewe lamb brought the King to a "realising sense" of his sin, the fruit of which was a child doomed to death. This gave occasion for one of those graphic touches for which the Hebrew genius was so remarkable. The peril of the sick child was made a bitter punishment for the offending monarch, but, when it was dead, he comforted himself: "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, who knoweth whether the Lord will not be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him but he shall not return to me," and so he proceeded to comfort Bath-Sheba and became the father of Solomon, and "the Lord loved him."

This episode over, we have the conclusion of the war upon Ammon under David's own command, but it is to be hoped that the statement that he put the people of its cities "under saws

and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron and made them pass through the brick kiln" is not to be taken literally. The more pleasing interpretation is that he put them to labour and service with these instruments.

There is a series of vivid pictures of the royal life and the manners of the time in David's promiscuous family. He is said to have had six sons by as many wives at Hebron when he was King of Judah only. When he made his compact with Abner for bringing under his sway the other tribes which had made the son of Saul their King, he made it a prime condition that his first wife, Michal, the daughter of Saul, should be torn from her weeping husband and children and restored to him. When he became king of all Israel at Jerusalem he is said to have taken more concubines and wives there, and "there were yet sons and daughters born to David." It was not a harmonious royal family. The evil passion of the son Amnon for Tamar, a sister of Absalom, brought as many woes as the fated iniquities of a Greek tragedy. Though David was very "wroth," he left the penalty to the blood-avenging Absalom, who was thus estranged, and who afterwards led a revolt most humiliating to the king, whose life and throne were probably saved by the stern and ruthless Joab.

What David and his kingdom owed to this unsparing warrior, who commanded his motley

army of mercenaries, was requited by his violent death clinging to the horns of the altar when Solomon became king. It was he and his two brothers that led the forces against the adherents of the house of Saul to win the kingdom of all Israel. Though David lamented the death of Abner when he was killed by Joab, out of revenge for his own brother's death, and condemned the sons of Zeruiah as "too hard for him," Joab distrusted Abner and probably saved the king as well as himself from serious trouble. It was Joab that reconciled the king with the son for whom he visibly yearned, but when Absalom won the hearts of the people by his wiles and headed the revolt of Israel at Hebron, the grizzled warrior faithfully followed the king in his mournful retreat to the refuge across the Jordan Valley and was chief of the three who led the forces that faced the host of rebels under Amasa. He outraged the heart of the king by killing Absalom, but he regarded it as a stern necessity, and when the king gave way to grief and mourning he boldly rebuked his weakness and forced him to a royal attitude before the people. He was chiefly instrumental in restoring the kingdom and quenching the new revolt that would again have stripped the other tribes from Judah. The killing of Amasa, who had led the rebellious host of Absalom and been chosen by David to take Joab's place in confronting the new revolt, may have had a motive of jealousy and

selfishness, but it was a stroke of policy in behalf of the king as well. David feared and hated Joab, but he owed him much and dared not dispense with him.

It was a barbarous time and these pristine narratives show little of the religious spirit which the later material sought to reflect back upon it. Recognition of the mighty God of Israel is not wholly lacking, but there is not that familiarity with him so common in later narratives. After the suppression of the revolts which followed the conquest of external enemies not much remains to the reign of David. We are thrown back by some disjointed material relating to different episodes. There appears to have been a drought, described as a famine, during some part of the reign, and a relatively late writer considered it necessary to account for this. It is said to have lasted "three years, year after year," and David asked the Lord about it and was told that it was due to Saul having "put to death the Gibeonites," with whom Israel had a sworn covenant from the time of Joshua, and atonement must be made for that. So the Gibeonites were permitted to hang in Gibeah the two sons of Rizpah, Saul's concubine, and five sons of Michal born to her and another husband after David's flight from Saul. After that the bones of Saul and Jonathan were gathered from Jabesh-Gilead and buried in the sepulchre of Kish in Benjamin. Thus was God

"entreated for the land." This is not in any modern view a satisfactory way of accounting for famine and recovery therefrom.

Another fragment follows this relating to the gigantic warriors of the Philistines, which serves to introduce what is called David's song of victory or of thanksgiving, when he was delivered out of the hands of all his enemies. This composition is not of his time and is a repetition of the eighteenth psalm. The verses called the "last words" of David are certainly not authentic and are framed in imitation of the utterances attributed to Balaam. Another disconnected passage, giving an account of the "mighty men whom David had," is believed to have been taken from that source of material relating to David's exploits which, so far as it was preserved, treated mainly of his relation with Saul and Jonathan before he came to the throne.

An event which one of the later writers felt bound to account for was the choice of the site of the future temple. Perhaps, also, there had been an epidemic which must be attributed to the "Anger of the Lord." At all events, it was said that the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and we are not told why. He moved David to have a census of the people taken, against the remonstrance of Joab, and when it was done the king suddenly concluded that he had committed a great sin. It appears for the first time that he

had a "seer" named Gad, and through him the Lord proposed as a penalty a choice of three evils, seven years of famine, discomfiture by his enemies for three months, or a three days' pestilence in the land. He chose the last, and seventy thousand men had to die to appease the wrath of the Lord because the people were numbered at his own instigation; but on David's plea the hand of the destroying angel was stayed at Jerusalem, and where he stood on the threshing floor of Araunah an altar was built and offerings were made. "So the Lord was entreated for the land and the plague was stayed from Israel." This account is no doubt just as historical as that of the pestilence inflicted upon the camp of the Greeks at Troy in answer to the prayer of the priest Chryses, and the angel that "stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it," was just as real as the avenging god to whom the priest appealed as "Smintheus."

The conclusion of that most authentic account of David's reign which was interrupted with these interpolations by the late compilers is to be found included in the first two chapters of the first Book of Kings. The division of what are now four books, effected in the early versions, was quite arbitrary. In the first Greek version Samuel was one and Kings was one and later there were four books of Kings. The original compilation before the exile and its recension afterwards, though

sufficiently disconnected at many points, was continuous and devoid of titles. A proper point of division is between the reign of David and that of Solomon.

Probably it is historically true that, when David was "old and stricken in years" and his blood had to be cherished into warmth by the fair damsel of Shunam, his son Adonijah set out, with the concurrence of Joab, Abiathar the priest, and of his brothers with the exception of Solomon, to take possession of the throne on his father's death, and that he got up a most unseemly feast with that end in view. It is doubtless equally true that Bath-Sheba at the instigation, or with the connivance, of Nathan the prophet and Zadok the priest, determined to thwart that scheme by placing Solomon on the throne, with the old king's sanction, even before he was dead. The account of this in the first chapter of the first Book of Kings is most dramatic, but in its language it is necessarily a work of the imagination. It was written at least a generation after the events and the words of the actors in the little drama could hardly have been preserved, if they had ever been known. But in no drama or epic passage are the actual words of the characters supposed to be recorded. The Hebrew writer had the same liberty as the Greek writer to imagine the language of his kings and priests and heroes.

It was the late compiler of the theocratic his-

tory of Israel who conceived the dying charge of David to his royal son in the spirit of the Deuteronomic law, and made him counsel the doom of Joab and that Benjamite who railed at the king when he was fleeing from Absalom; but the original narrative is reverted to in the account of the execution of the supposed dying injunction. Solomon had his own motive and manner for getting rid of the brother who sought to forestall him and of the grim warrior who had abetted the attempt, though David may indeed have enjoined upon him the vengeful duty of disposing of Joab and Shimei, the Benjamite. It was sufficient to seclude the offending priest Abiathar at Anathoth, which at a later day was to furnish Jerusalem with the prophet Jeremiah. Solomon evidently had no compunction about clearing his court of those whom he feared or distrusted, even to violating his word to his mother and having Joab slain as he clung to the sacred altar, and he had a ready instrument in Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, whom he placed in command of the "host."

The account of the reign of Solomon is, like the rest of the Books of Kings, of composite material, but it was probably derived largely from the source referred to at its close as the "Book of the Acts of Solomon," though it is liberally interlarded with passages from the hand of the compiler who was imbued with the theocratic doctrine and familiar with the law that condemned all wor-

ship in the "high places," a law which was not promulgated until three centuries after the time of Solomon. There are also evident traces of the hand of the redactor who put the finishing touches to these narratives after the exile. The contrast between the manner and style of the account of David's reign and that of his son is as striking as that between the two characters and that between the events of the two reigns.

David had extended widely the borders of his realm, subdued its external enemies and quelled the tendency to internal revolt, for which the proud tribe of Ephraim and the fierce community of Benjamin were always so ready. The great empires of the East and South were quiescent and there appears to have been a long period of peace which enabled the new king to organise an effective administration and enter upon great enterprises for his own glory and that of the God of Israel. He began by making "affinity" with Egypt and securing as one of his wives a daughter of the reigning Pharaoh. He sought the co-operation of Hiram of Tyre, who had been on friendly relations with his father, to secure for his use the materials and workmanship and the industrial and commercial skill for which Phœnicia was pre-eminent in the ancient world. His first great undertaking was that of building at Jerusalem a gorgeous temple to "the Lord," which his father is supposed to have promised, and an im-

posing palace for himself and his retinue. It was his ambition to shine among the potentates of the earth, and to bring wealth and power to the support of his kingdom, with the help of an alliance with the greatest commercial nation of the time. With Hiram he is said to have devised and carried out expeditions for bringing gold and silver, precious stones and other riches from distant lands, apparently out of the dark continent of Africa. We are vouchsafed no information as to the means by which these were obtained, but they may have been similar to those used by Spain to enrich herself from newly discovered countries in later centuries.

The material success achieved by Solomon led the panegyrists of his reign to magnify and glorify his knowledge and wisdom, which was to be accounted for after the manner of his time. It was said that the Lord appeared to him in a dream, when he went to Gibeon to sacrifice, and offered him whatever he should ask for, and was so gratified that he asked for "an understanding heart" to enable him to "judge this thy great people," that he promised to add to this "both riches and honour," insomuch that there should not be any among kings like unto him. His kingdom was neither extensive nor populous, but, in the hyperbole characteristic of the writers, the people are referred to as beyond computation in number, "as the sand which is by the sea for multitude." The

latest editor of the narrative took occasion to qualify Solomon's devotion to the Lord with the statement that he sacrificed and offered incense in the high places, and to make the Lord warn him in his dream that he must walk in his ways and keep his statutes and commandments as his father David had done, if he would lengthen his days.

After this dream and the promise of wisdom and greatness, the story of the two harlots who quarrelled over the possession of the surviving child was introduced as an example of wonderful wisdom. Then to illustrate the monarch's wealth and power there is a statement regarding his chief officers and the means by which the royal household was provided with subsistence, which must have been a heavy charge upon the country. The glory and greatness, the wealth and security of the kingdom and the marvellous knowledge and wisdom of the king being duly magnified by statements which cannot be verified and can only be refuted by the rules of probability or credibility, such as would be applied elsewhere, much space is given to the building and equipping of the temple, the details of which are hardly more interesting than Homer's catalogue of the Greek ships before Troy. The account of the dedication of the temple, with the King's blessing of the "congregation of Israel" and his prolonged invocation to the "Lord, the God of Israel," is demonstrably of late production and is pervaded with the spirit

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of the Deuteronomic law. It contains unmistakable allusions to the later experience of the nation, and, in the latter part of the invocation, to the "captivity" and promise of restoration through repentance and supplication. There is the same tone of retrospect in the second appearance of the Lord to Solomon in a dream, "as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon," for a repetition of warning and promise.

After all this edification we are permitted to resort to the primitive story of material greatness, and the expedition to Ophir is made the prelude to the visit of the Queen of Sheba, which is so like a tale out of the Thousand and One Nights. The statistics of wealth with which this is garnished are doubtless as exact as those that tell of the innumerable population and the multitude of the enemies of Israel who were wont to fall in battle when the wrath of the Lord was aroused.

But it was necessary to account for the fact that Solomon's Kingdom was doomed to fall from its greatness at his death, notwithstanding all the prestige of his wisdom and wealth as a ruler and the glories of David as a warlike monarch, and in spite of the peculiar affection of "the Lord" for these two successful kings. The fact is that the nation was weakened and the hegemony of Judah was undermined by the prosperity and luxury of Solomon's reign, while his son and heir, Rehoboam, was a vain and arrogant weakling.

Had it not been for the stronghold of Mount Zion and the establishment there of a great centre of worship with a splendèd temple and palace, it is probable that the revolt of the "ten tribes" under Jeroboam would have resulted in the complete subjugation if not the obliteration of Judah. As it was, the ancient name of Israel was assumed as the undisputed title of the new Kingdom of the North, which for a long time flaunted its superiority over that from which it had been torn away by successful insurrection, and raised the name of Joseph to a glory that was finally accepted as the common heritage.

But the "theocratic pragmatism" demanded a different explanation. Not only had Solomon married an Egyptian wife at the start and sacrificed in the high places before the temple was built, but he "loved many strange women," which means simply foreign women, and took wives and concubines from the neighbouring nations, and these are said to have "turned away his heart after other gods" when he was old. This in the eyes of the Deuteronomist compiler of this history made the Lord "angry with Solomon," and he was plainly told that inasmuch as he had gone back on his word and failed to keep his "covenant," the Lord would surely rend the kingdom away from him and give it to his servant. But for David's sake he would wait till Solomon was dead and rend it from his son; and, still for

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David's sake and for the sake of Jerusalem, he would leave him one tribe. This was to conform with what had happened long before the writer's time. But the real fact was that Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, a capable and industrious young man and a "mighty man of valour," son of an Ephraimite widow, whom Solomon had placed in charge of "the labour of the house of Joseph" in his building operations at Jerusalem, had rebelled against the king's authority and been compelled to flee to Egypt to save his life. When the king died, all Ephraim and the other Northern tribes were ready to rise and declare their independence, and Jeroboam came back to head the insurrection and was made ruler of the new kingdom, which was far more powerful than what was left of the old one.

This prosaic fact not only had to be accounted for by the recreancy of Solomon, and threatened beforehand by "the Lord" himself, but a prophet must be made instrumental in bringing it about. So, according to that same Deuteronomist writer of a later century, the prophet Ahijah of Shiloh met Jeroboam outside of Jerusalem, clad in a new garment which he tore into twelve pieces, giving ten to the rebellious Ephraimite as a token that the Lord would make him king of the ten tribes, still reserving Judah, for David's sake. This prophet repeats the words of the Lord, as prophets were wont to do, and promised Jeroboam

that if he would walk in the way of the Lord and obey his commands after the manner of David he would build him a "sure house," while he would "afflict the house of David, but not forever." So the way was prepared for what happened when Solomon "slept with his fathers and was buried in the City of David his father, and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead."

VII

THEOCRATIC ACCOUNT OF THE TWO KINGDOMS

THE account of the two kingdoms, which begins with the Twelfth Chapter of the first book of Kings, is not a history. It was compiled in the latter days of the Kingdom of Judah, revised and added to in the exile, and retouched after the return, and its purpose was not to record facts but to inculcate a doctrine, the doctrine that events were ordered by "the Lord," that is, Yahweh, the God of Israel; that all calamities to either nation were inflicted by him as a punishment for sin in disobeying his commands, neglecting his worship and going after other gods, and that his people must depend wholly upon him for rescue from peril, success against their enemies and prosperity in the land which he had given them. If other nations attacked them, it was because he put them up to it and used them as his scourge; and if his people repented and obeyed and worshipped him in humility and faithfulness, he would turn their enemies back, and even destroy them for their presumption if they persisted. This was the teaching of the prophets and was the belief of

those who had a hand in the final account of the vicissitudes of the kingdoms.

This account was made up from a variety of material, part of it drawn from the annals of the two kingdoms, previously brought together, much of it from legendary and mythical sources, and some of it from the imagination of the compilers, as they conceived of that which they could not know. There was no effort at accuracy of statement and little at consistency. The generally accepted date of the death of Solomon is 933 B. C., and the known date of the capture of Samaria and the destruction of the Northern Kingdom is 722, making the duration of that kingdom 211 years. According to the chronological scheme of the compiler, who adopted no fixed era but dated the reign of each king of either kingdom from the regnal year of the king of the other, and gave the length of the reign in every case, this period covered 241 years, 7 months and 7 days in Israel and 260 years in Judah, which indicates considerable inaccuracy in the reckoning.

The compiler or redactor who connected the various reigns in this loose manner and briefly characterised the different kings as he dismissed them from the scene, is usually designated by scholars as a "Deuteronomist," or a writer imbued with the doctrine of the law which taught that worship anywhere but at Jerusalem was sin and made obedience to the commands of Yahweh

the test of all merit. This law was unknown before the reign of Josiah, a century after the fall of Samaria, but that did not prevent condemnation of Jeroboam and all his successors for departing from it, or make it other than sin for the earlier kings of Judah to tolerate worship "in the high places," which became an enticement to heathenism. That was the chief fault imputed even to Solomon, which caused the rending of most of the kingdom from the House of David.

Until the attacks came from the powerful empire of the East, in the Eighth Century B. C., the kingdom of Israel, or Ephraim, was much the stronger and more flourishing, and for a considerable part of the time Judah was in a state of vassalage to it, or to some ally as a protection against it. Its greater extent, the survival of many of the Canaanites in its territory, and its contact with Phœnicia and Syria, made its people and its rulers more prone to the enticement of other cults than that of Yahweh, or more tolerant of them, while Judah had the advantage of comparative isolation, an almost impregnable stronghold at Jerusalem, the possession of a splendid temple as a centre of worship, and a stable dynasty to which the achievements of David and Solomon gave a lasting prestige. While the direct line of David continued on the throne of Judah until the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadrezzar in 586 B. C., twelve reigns covering

the period from Solomon to the destruction of Samaria in 722, there were nine dynasties and seventeen kings in Israel, from Jeroboam to Hoshea. Seven of the kings were murdered by their successors and one burned himself in the palace after holding it only seven days. The situation of Judah in these respects and the rising of such mighty advocates of Yahweh's right and power as Isaiah and Jeremiah in times of crisis, gave the "peculiar people" their wonderful solidarity and saved their religion as a heritage to after times. It also gave to the Jews as distinguished from the Israelites the opportunity to determine the final character of the literature that was to be sanctified as the epic of the race of Jacob.

The revolt of the Northern tribes under the lead of Ephraim at the death of Solomon was easily accomplished, and the daring youth who had started the rebellion in the face of that monarch returned from Egypt to be made the first King of Israel, as a separate realm, at Shechem. As a civil ruler he was probably the ablest man that ever sat on a throne in either kingdom and the debt of the literature of both to his sojourn in Egypt cannot be estimated. His great offence in the eyes of the later Judean writers was setting up the worship of Yahweh at the two extremes of his kingdom, Bethel and Dan, and centring it there by golden images of

calves, or bulls; but those symbols had been in common use, and it was not until long afterward that they were regarded as sinful representations of the deity. The contest against the use of images in Yahweh's worship continued even in Judah until after the promulgation of the Deuteronomic law in the reign of Josiah, and was not altogether successful even then. In Jeroboam's time it was not even condemned, though at Jerusalem the old "ark of the Lord," with its later adornment of Cherubim, took the place of the ephod and the teraphim in the central place of worship.

In the scanty account of Jeroboam's reign the hand of the theocratic compiler of the record is conspicuous, and his leading motive is to attribute all the calamities which befel the Northern Kingdom to the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat and the example he had set, and always to credit predictions of what happened to prophets or "men of God." Even the failure of Rehoboam to make a hopeless fight for his entire royal heritage was said to have been due to a warning from a "man of God" named Shemaiah, for had not Yahweh himself rent the realm asunder on account of the recreancy of Solomon and given the larger part to Jeroboam through the agency of the prophet Ahijah? When the king had set up his altar at Bethel, a "man of God" appears out of Judah to predict what was to happen to

it in the days of Josiah, even the name of the latter being given centuries beforehand. Such a prophecy was not difficult after what had happened in the writer's time, and that, with the miracle of the withered hand, marks the episode as mythical, even admitting that the familiar language of men in converse with each other could have been preserved for three or four hundred years in that age of the world. Equally mythical must be the tales of the fate of that same "man of God," as the result of the duplicity of the "old prophet" of Bethel, for which there seemed to be no adequate excuse, since such a test of the fidelity of a "man of God" by absolute lying was hardly reasonable or just.

It would appear that Jeroboam had a child who died, and that the son who succeeded him was killed, after a reign of two years, by Baasha, who took possession of his throne. These were events to be explained and to have been foretold by prophets. Hence the story of sending the mother of the sick child in disguise to the prophet Ahijah at Shiloh, the prevision of the trick, and the prediction that the child would die and that the house of Jeroboam would be cut off. Even the rooting up and scattering of Israel two centuries later was duly predicted. These stories served the chief purpose of the writer, but for the real achievements of the king, "how he warred and how he reigned," we are referred to

the "Chronicles of the Kings of Israel," which fortunately for that purpose and unfortunately for our knowledge, were not preserved.

The slight account of the reign of Rehoboam and his son Abijam in Judah indicates that matters were no better in that realm than in the other, so far as the manner of worship and religious conduct were concerned; but when the long reign of the other son, Asa, came in, there was a change for the better. There seem to have been not only idols, but Sodomites to be "removed," and even the king's mother had an "abominable image," that was burnt. But though it is said that "the heart of Asa was perfect with the Lord all his days" he had to strip "the house of the Lord" of its most precious treasures to buy an alliance with the king of Syria and save himself from Baasha, who had with Israelite vigour and ruthlessness exterminated the house of Jeroboam. There is little more said of Asa, except that he was at war with Baasha "all their days" and that in his old age he was "diseased in his feet," but as Baasha walked in the way of Jeroboam and did evil in the sight of the Lord, a prophet must needs appear to convey to him "the word of the Lord" to the effect that it was the latter who had raised him from the dust and made him prince over his people, (by assassination,) and who would sweep away his house as he had swept away that of Jeroboam, in like bloody fashion.

'Accordingly, after his son Elah had reigned two years one of his captains, Zimri by name, killed him while he was "drinking himself drunk" at his capital, Tirzah, and then slaughtered all his household; but it was this same Zimri that set fire to the palace and perished in it after "reigning" seven days, when he was beset by a rival "captain of the host," Omri by name.

Omri had a conspiracy to overcome at the start, but he established a dynasty that lasted for four reigns before wholesale assassination, duly predicted and prepared for, made another change; and he built a new capital on the hill of Samaria. Of course, he did evil and dealt wickedly. No king of Israel could do otherwise; but his deeds were only recorded in the lost chronicles of his kingdom. No prophet figures in his reign, but the deficiency is made up in that of his son Ahab, who, not content with walking in the sins of Jeroboam, married the Phœnician, or Sidonian, princess Jezebel, and tolerated the worship of Baal at Samaria. Thereby did he "yet more provoke the Lord (Yahweh), the God of Israel, to anger than all the Kings of Israel that were before him." It is the conflict between the worship of Yahweh and of Baal, in which the mysterious prophet Elijah figures, that chiefly made his reign interesting to the theocratic writer and makes it so to us. Doubtless this name of a "Tishbite" who was of the sojourners of

Gilead stands for a real person in those stormy days, but he is so enveloped in mists of myth and legend that the tangible facts of his career are hardly traceable.

The material relating to Elijah and that relating to his successor Elisha is taken bodily from old Ephraimite writings and has a highly picturesque and epic quality; but it has almost wholly the character of myth, with traces of historic legend, and it is nearly as ancient as that relating to the patriarchs and the ante-diluvian world. Associated with it is other material of Ephraimite origin pertaining to the conflicts between Israel and Syria, which has much of the same mythical or legendary quality. The passages made up from this material, slightly modified here and there in the compiling and editing, contain the substance of what we are told of the Northern kingdom, but it is more than we are told about Judah for the same period, and far more interesting from a literary point of view, though less didactic and edifying.

Apparently there were three years of drought culminating in famine in the time of Ahab, and Elijah the Tishbite is introduced suddenly as having predicted it in the name of "the Lord, the God of Israel," and as being then sent to a brook that was "before Jordan" and fed by ravens. With equal suddenness "the Lord" sends him back across the country to Zidon to sustain life

by making the widow's barrel of meal and cruse of oil inexhaustible, and to reward her for her care by bringing her dead child to life. According to tradition Ahab's Phœnician wife had not only introduced the worship of Baal at Samaria, but had persecuted and nearly exterminated the prophets of Yahweh. It is implied that the famine was a consequence of this, and there was to be an expiation by a sacrifice of the prophets of Baal.

So, "after many days," Elijah was sent to Ahab to bring this about. He meets the faithful Obadiah of the king's household, who claims to have saved a hundred of the prophets by hiding them in caves, and through him reaches the monarch who greets him as the "troubler of Israel." The king consents to the test at Mount Carmel as to whether Baal or Yahweh is God. The four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and four hundred prophets of the Asherah call in vain upon Baal to send fire to light the sacrifice on the altar while Elijah derides them, but in answer to his simple prayer to the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Israel, after the altar and the sacrifice have been drenched with water, "the Lord" lets fall the fire that consumes the sacrifice and the very stones of the altar. Thereupon the sole prophet of Israel slays all those of Baal at the brook Kishon, and the rain long waited for comes in floods while Ahab drives in

haste to Jezreel in his chariot and the prophet outruns him on foot. The enraged Jezebel threatens his life and "the Lord" sends him to the wilderness beyond Beersheba in the distant part of Judah, where he is fed by an angel with food that sustains him forty days while he goes to Mount Horeb, the scene of the revelation to Moses. Here the Lord appears unto him, not in the wind that rends the rocks of the mountain, nor in the earthquake that shakes its foundations, nor yet in the fire that blasts its surface, but in a "still small voice" that commissions him to go to Damascus and anoint Hazael king over Syria and to anoint Jehu king over Israel, that there may be more slaughter of those who have slain the prophets, forsaken the covenant and overthrown the altars. Thus is prefigured the fate that overtook Benhadad of Syria and the successors of Ahab. The prophet was also to anoint Elisha as his own successor.

All this is as vivid and dramatic as anything in Homer, and we have the very words of "the Lord" and of his prophets as well as of the other characters in the varied story. It is also in all detail as mythical as the wrath of Achilles, the prayer of Chryses and the pestilence inflicted upon the Greeks by Apollo, and would be readily recognised as such in any literature but that of the Hebrews, who were no more wedded to fact or devoid of imagination than the Greeks.

The story of Elijah is interrupted after the scene on Mount Horeb and after he has cast his mantle upon Elisha, who thenceforth follows him, in order to bring in from the other Ephraimite source the beginning of the conflict between Ahab and Benhadad of Syria, which was to result in a change of dynasty for both realms. The King of Israel met the arrogant demands and boastful threats of Benhadad with the spirited defiance: "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off"; and, notwithstanding the sins imputed to him by the Judean writers of a later day, the Ephraimite tale makes him victorious by the favour of the Lord, and shows that there were still prophets in Israel besides Elijah. The Syrian king is advised that his discomfiture was due to the fact that Israel's God was a god of the hills, and in the next campaign he makes his attack in the plain. But though the "children of Israel," encamped at Aphek, were "like two little flocks of kids" and the Syrians "filled the country," the Lord demonstrated that he was a god of the valleys as well as of the hills by delivering the Syrians into the hands of his little army and enabling it to slay "a hundred thousand footmen in one day," while 27,000 more were crushed by a falling wall, surely a terrible slaughter for such a puny war. The humiliation of Benhadad and the triumph of Ahab were complete, but by one of those curious

subterfuges that are related of prophets and sons of prophets, "the Lord" let the King of Israel know that he had offended in showing magnanimity to the Syrian king, whom the vindictive deity wished him to destroy.

Another passage from the story of Elijah is then introduced by the compiler to set forth yet more the iniquity of Ahab and Jezebel and to account for the bloody fate that awaited them. Their sin consisted in taking the vineyard of Naboth to add to the royal domain at Jezreel, which led Elijah to convey to Ahab the threat of the Lord that the dogs should lick his blood in the place where they licked the blood of Naboth, and that the dogs should eat Jezebel by the rampart of Jezreel. This is figuratively, if not literally, what had happened long before the story was written; but the prophecy was not explicit enough for the purpose of the theocratic narrator, and he injected the threat of the Lord that the house of Ahab should be destroyed like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat and the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith he had provoked the Lord to anger. This was meant to credit more emphatically to the proper source what happened when the anointed Jehu came to his own. But the older writer lets us know that Ahab humbled himself in repentance and that was why the evil day did not befall his house in his own time, but in that

of his son. In any modern view his offence was less than that of David in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

The story of the battle of Ramoth-Gilead, which resulted in the king's death, is drawn from the old Ephraimite source and illustrates the chronological incongruity of the disjointed compilation, in that Jehoshaphat of Judah appears as the ally of Ahab in the effort to recover that place from Syria, though he had not previously been mentioned, and his accession to the throne of Judah is spoken of farther on. According to the chronological scheme of the compiler, he had been King of Judah seventeen years when he joined Ahab in this unlucky enterprise. An interesting feature of this episode is the revelation of the manner in which the ordinary prophet of the time took part in the doings of kings. Ahab gathered four hundred prophets for a consultation, whether of Baal or of Yahweh is not stated, but their counsel was to go up to the battle against Ramoth-Gilead, "for the Lord shall deliver it unto the hand of the king." But Jehoshaphat wished to know if there was not "here beside a prophet of the Lord," which brought out Micaiah, whom Ahab hated because he only prophesied evil for him. When Zedekiah in symbolical fashion made him horns of iron and declared that the Lord said that with these the king shall "push the Syrians till they be consumed," and all the prophets bade him

"go up and prosper," Micaiah echoed their advice in apparent derision, for, after the king had rebuked him, he "saw all Israel scattered upon the mountains as sheep that have no shepherd," and advised that every man "return to his house in peace," whereupon he was again rebuked for prophesying only evil. Then he declared that he "saw the Lord sitting on his throne and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left," and sending forth a "lying spirit" to entice Ahab through the other prophets to go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead. This brought a blow from Zedekiah upon the cheek of Micaiah and the imprisoning of the latter, to be fed upon the bread of affliction and the water of affliction. Nevertheless, the battle went against the king and he was killed in his chariot and brought to Samaria to be buried; and the editor of the narrative takes pains to note that when his chariot was washed the dogs licked up the blood.

After some of the dry notes of the Judean compiler of the accession of the son of Ahab to the throne of Israel, and of the accession of Jehoshaphat to the throne of Judah, with a brief summary of the reign of the latter, and a statement of his death and burial, there is another instalment of the doings of Elijah, who always appears in an atmosphere of mystery. Ahab's son Ahaziah, who reigned only two years, fell through a lattice in his upper chamber and was "sick." Instead

of appealing to "the Lord" on that occasion he sent messengers to Baal-zebub of Ekron to inquire whether he would get well. This offended "the Lord," and his "angel" sent Elijah to meet the messengers of the ruler of Samaria and turn them back to ask the king if there is no god in Israel that he sends to inquire of the god of Ekron. When the king learns that his messengers were turned back by a "hairy man and girt with a girdle of leather," he recognises the Tishbite, whom he probably did not know where to find before, inasmuch as he was left in the heathen darkness of his father's palace where Jezebel still survived. Learning of his coming he sends a captain with fifty men to him as he sits on the top of a hill, to bring the "man of God" to the king quickly.

It seems rather harsh that fire should be invoked from heaven to destroy two captains with their fifties before a third by humble petition prevails upon the angel of the Lord to send the prophet to tell the king that inasmuch as he had sent to Baal-zebub the god of Ekron "because there is no god in Israel to inquire of his word," he shall not "come down from his bed," but will "surely die." An awkward note is injected here by the compiler saying that Jehoram his brother began to reign in his stead in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat King of Judah, though a little further on it is said that this same Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign at Samaria in the

eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat, who had still seven years to reign at Jerusalem before he was succeeded by his son Jehoram.

Between these two notes there is the curious tale of the manner in which Elisha succeeded to the prophetic mantle of Elijah and the latter was carried off by a whirlwind. It is made to appear as though the older prophet were trying to get away from the younger, and that the latter pursued him back and forth as the Lord sent him first to Gilgal, then to Bethel, then to Jericho, and finally across the Jordan, where they were parted by a chariot of fire and horses of fire, while Elijah disappeared in the whirlwind. Elisha's course in this pursuit and his objection to the proposal of the "sons of the prophets" to seek for the prophet who had disappeared, might almost raise the suspicion that the other had made way with his predecessor after the manner of the kings at Samaria, and that his taking-off was covered with this cloud of obvious myth.

Elisha now comes more into the light of prosaic fable with his miracles. He begins by purifying the springs of water at Jericho with a cruse of salt, after re-crossing the Jordan by smiting the river with the mantle of Elijah to make a way for himself. Then he goes up to Bethel to inflict the penalty of death upon forty-two heedless children who greeted him as bald head. This seems like a severe chastisement to teach respect for a

prophet of the Lord. He figures next in an expedition of the kings of Israel and Judah and of Edom against Moab, the account of which seems to have been drawn from an Ephraimite source similar to that describing the conflicts with Syria. From this it appears that the sheep raising King of Moab was a vassal of Israel, and that Jehoshaphat of Judah and the King of Edom were also subject to the commands of Jehoram. Again we have a curious illustration of the ways of prophets. Elisha appears as accompanying the expedition, and when Jehoshaphat asks if there is not a prophet of the Lord to inquire of regarding a dearth of water, he is called upon, and while scorning to comply with the request of a son of Ahab and Jezebel consents on account of the King of Judah; but it requires the playing of a minstrel to bring on the ecstasy and the vision of the prophet.

What really happened, who can tell? But the story is that the Lord bade them fill the valley with trenches, and without wind or rain these were filled over night with water rushing in from the way of Edom. It appeared like blood to the Moabites in the morning light and lured them to slaughter. When the King of Moab was discomfited and his land was devastated, he offered his son as a burnt offering upon the wall, but why should that have brought great indignation or wrath upon Israel?

After this episode of legendary history we are

brought back abruptly to a series of Elisha's miracles, some of which are not of a dignified order, like that of relieving a widow of one of the "sons of prophets" of debt by making her pot of oil inexhaustible, that of the antidote to "death in the pot," that of feeding a hundred men with twenty barley loaves and some ears of corn and having some "left thereof," and causing the axe that flew from its helve into the river to float to the top by casting in a stick. More dignified, but not more credible, are those of bringing to life the son of the "great woman" of Shunam and curing the Syrian Captain Naaman of leprosy by a bath in the Jordan. These are crude and primitive ways of illustrating the powers of a prophet of the Lord, but characteristic of the beliefs of the time.

There is more of epic dignity in the passage that tells of Elisha's revealing the secrets of Benhadad to the King of Israel, conjuring up a host with horses and chariots when the Syrian monarch seeks to entrap him at Dothan, getting the Lord to smite the Syrians with blindness, leading them to Samaria, opening their eyes to their peril and forcing them to submission. But why had it been an offence on a former occasion to let Benhadad go after a voluntary submission, if now his men were to be fed and sent home in peace after being taken captive with the sword and the bow? Be-

cause consistency is not required in such poetic tales any more than credibility.

“And the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.” And yet we are immediately told, albeit from a different source, of the siege of Samaria by Benhadad and all his “host,” which reduced it to the extreme of famine, from which it was miraculously relieved and restored to plenty by the mysterious disappearance in the night of the besieging army. It is said that the Syrian soldiers heard “a voice of chariots and a noise of horses and the noise of a great host,” and “said one to another, Lo, the King of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians,” whereupon they fled in disorder leaving their supplies and their plunder behind them. If there is any historic fact back of this mysterious raising of the siege, it is probable that the Assyrian Army, which was then making forays in that region, or a rumour of its approach, had filled the Syrians with consternation and caused their precipitate flight. But historic fact is difficult to trace or to verify in such legendary writing.

It is a somewhat puerile interruption in the narrative that tells of the sending of that same Shunamite woman to the land of the Philistines at the time of a seven year famine and restoring her property on her return. But the march of events is resumed when Elisha goes to Damascus,

that a "man of God" may be an accomplice in the subtle assassination that makes Hazael King of Syria. Why a prophet should practise duplicity in such a service to the Lord we need not inquire. It illustrates the manner of the time. Had not Elijah long ago been commissioned at Mount Horeb to anoint Hazael king of Syria and to anoint Jehu king over Israel? There was no anointing of the Syrian by a prophet of Israel but Jehu's time was now at hand.

In all this graphic material "the Lord" seems to have been on the side of Israel as against Syria, and in the meantime little attention has been given to Judah, though Jehoshaphat is dead and the eight year reign of his son Jehoram must also be over. Here the unskilful compiler, before introducing the account of Jehu's exploits, lets us know that Jehoram or Joram has reigned contemporaneously with the monarch of the same name at Samaria, that he married a daughter of Ahab of Israel and did evil in the sight of the Lord, though he was permitted to suppress a revolt at Edom, and that he was succeeded by his son Ahaziah whose reign was only for one year, and he also did evil. This new King of Judah was brother-in-law of Joram of Israel and joined him in war against the new King of Syria at the great battleground of Ramoth-Gilead. The defeat and mortal wounding of Joram is made the preliminary to the anointing under the direction of Elisha of

Jehu, the wholesale assassin who was commissioned by the Lord from the time of Elijah to avenge upon the house of Ahab the blood of the prophets. He makes thorough work of it. Jezebel is thrown to the dogs, the seventy sons of Ahab and "all his great men, all his familiar friends and his priests," are slaughtered, and there is general massacre of the prophets and worshippers of Baal. "Thus," quoth the devout Deuteronomist, "Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel," and the Lord commended him for doing unto the house of Ahab "according to all that is in mine heart," and promised him the iniquitous throne at Samaria unto the fourth generation of his sons. It just so happened that the dynasty of Jehu had lasted that long when this promise was put in the mouth of the Lord as spoken directly to the bloody instrument of his vengeance.

It is only of this slaughterous service at the beginning of his reign that we are told, though Jehu was king at Samaria twenty-eight years. Things were hardly better at Jerusalem in those days, either in matters of worship or of politics. Jehu had dispatched Ahaziah of Judah along with Joram of Israel, and his mother Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, had destroyed all the rest of the family and seized the reins of Government, showing that she had inherited the spirit of Jezebel. The sister of Ahaziah, presumably a daughter of the queen mother, had, however, stolen

and hidden in the house of "the Lord" one from among the king's sons—how many he had at the age of twenty-three does not appear—and six years later the throne of David was transferred by assassination, but not out of his family. The priest Jehoiada and his confederates placed the child Joash on that royal seat, and made a covenant between the Lord and him and his people, that they should be the Lord's people. So the rule and worship of Baal was destroyed at Jerusalem and incidentally his priest was put to death. Joash ruled forty years under the guidance of Jehoiada and did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, but those pestilent "high places" remained. Notwithstanding his virtuous reign and the fact that, in spite of his priestly "graft," he succeeded in raising money for the repair of the temple, he was forced to strip it of its treasures and its "hallowed things" to buy off the King of Syria from attacking his capital, and was himself a victim of assassination. That zealous theocratic compiler who passed judgment upon the successive kings of both realms did not eliminate from his material these facts, though they seemed to contradict his doctrine.

Events were moving toward the doom of Israel, for though it prevailed in its conflicts with Syria and with Judah, it was destined to encounter the onslaught of the irresistible empire of the East. The effort to run the accounts of the two king-

doms on parallel lines from mixed material makes the narrative disjointed and confused, but it appears that the reign of Jehu's son was cut short by Hazael of Syria, who conquered and took several of his cities, but his grandson Jehoash, or Joash, defeated Hazael's successor and recovered the cities. Moreover, he scorned the proffered aid of Amaziah of Judah, and, when attacked by him, he broke down the walls of Jerusalem and plundered the house of the Lord and the king's house, and carried their treasures to Samaria. Nevertheless, he did evil in the sight of the Lord and Amaziah did that which was right, but Joash died in peace after his victories and left a son who had a victorious reign of forty-one years, while the King of Judah had to flee from a conspiracy at Jerusalem and was assassinated at Lachish. His son Azariah or Uzziah, was made king in his stead; and, though he reigned fifty-two years, we are told nothing about him except that he did that which was right and was smitten with leprosy.

The four generations of the sons of Jehu ended with Zechariah, who was assassinated after a reign of six months. Shallum, the assassin, held the throne one month and in his turn became the victim of Menahem, who reigned ten years and succeeded in leaving the power in the hands of a son, Pekahiah. The latter was assassinated in two years and Pekah seized the realm in the last year

of Azariah of Judah. He held it twenty years, but was assassinated by his successor the last of the Kings of Israel. It was in the time of Menahem that Assyria first laid its hand upon Samaria. "Pul," who became King of Assyria as Tiglath-Pileser, came and made a vassal of Menahem and exacted a heavy tribute, which continued until Hoshea, the last King of Israel, revolted and sought support from Egypt, which brought the destined destruction upon Israel. In the reign of Pekah the same Assyrian king had occasion to exhibit his power in those parts, but when Hoshea attempted his revolt it was Shalmaneser that came to besiege Samaria and destroy the kingdom, on account of that original sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat and the multiplied sins of his successors. It was Sargon, however, who completed the work.

There is a characteristic note of the death of Elisha in the course of the narrative, in which he is made to predict the victories of Joash of Israel over Syria, and the failure utterly to subjugate that nation, and his miraculous power is displayed even after his death by the revival, as soon as it touched his "bones," of a corpse that was thrown into his sepulchre.

But in this interval before the destruction of Samaria occurs an episode in the relation of Israel and Judah which is of special interest as the first occasion for the appearance of the greatest of

Hebrew prophets. After the death of Jotham the son of Azariah, his son Ahaz became king, while Pekah was king at Samaria. Now Ahaz is said not to have done that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, like David, but to have indulged in the abominations of the heathen. It was hardly for that reason that Rezin of Syria and Pekah of Israel made their attack upon Jerusalem, which was defeated only because Ahaz appealed to Tiglath-Pileser and induced him with treasures of gold and silver in the house of the Lord and in the king's house, to capture Damascus. This made Judah a vassal of Assyria, but it saved Jerusalem for the time being. We shall find this salvation credited to the Lord through a prophecy of Isaiah when we consider more fully the oracles attributed to that theocratic champion, but the Assyrian king must be made the instrument.

The destruction of Samaria and the dispersion of Israel came afterwards, in the reign of Hezekiah of Judah, and it gave occasion for the compiler of these narratives,—who wrote before Jerusalem suffered the same fate as Samaria, at the hands of the King of Babylon, and who still hoped for the salvation of Judah,—and for the final redactor, who wrote in the time of the exile and knew the fate that had overtaken Judah, as well as Israel, to descant upon the causes of this calamity in their several ways. Their reflections are interwoven and added to,

but it is easy to distinguish those which preceded the fall of Jerusalem from those which followed it.

The fate of the northern kingdom had for a time a potent influence upon the course of the one that remained, and furnished much inspiration for the prophets whose utterances have come down to us. Hezekiah, the son of the sinful Ahaz, was submissive to the influence of Isaiah, the prophet, and he "did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord according to all that David his father had done"; and again the symbols of heathen worship were broken up, not only at Jerusalem, but in the "high places." Among other things the king is said to have broken up the brazen serpent that Moses made, to which the children of Israel had burnt incense until that time. He ventured to revolt against the sovereignty of Assyria, to which his father had submitted as a means of rescue from Israel and Syria, and this brought Sennacherib, who was ravaging the neighbouring country, down upon his capital.

There are two parallel accounts, or fragments of such, from different sources, awkwardly joined together by the compiler of the narrative, of the threat which Sennacherib sent to Hezekiah when he rashly sought the aid of Egypt, the chief enemy of Assyria, in his revolt against the empire of which he was a vassal. It is in strict accordance with the manner of the writer who wrought the narrative from the material under his hand and modified

it to suit his purpose, that the result of this menace was foretold by a prophet of "the Lord," who happens in this case to be one of those whose productions in mutilated and disordered shape have come down to us. The emissaries of Sennacherib had defied the God of Judah and reminded his followers of the fate of other places that had relied upon their gods. They even declared in the name of their master that it was at the command of "the Lord" that he came up against this land to destroy it.

According to one of the two accounts which are blended in the composition, Hezekiah in his alarm at the menace from the King of Assyria sent to Isaiah, appealing to him to lift up his prayer "for the remnant that is left." The prophet sent back a message to the king in the name of the Lord, not to be afraid of the words, "wherewith the servants of the King of Assyria have blasphemed me," saying also, "Behold I will put a spirit in him, and he shall hear a rumour and shall return to his own land, and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land." According to the other account Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord and lifted up a prayer on his own account, the words of which are duly set down, and the prophet being instinctively aware of this, sent to him saying, "Thus saith the Lord, whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib, King of Assyria, I have heard thee." Then is introduced

from some source, genuine or otherwise, one of the eloquent and poetical oracles of Isaiah against the King of Assyria, and appended thereto is the promise of the Lord that he will defend and save Jerusalem for his own sake and for the sake of David his servant. "And it came to pass in the night that the angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and four score and five thousand; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses." And it is added from a different source that Sennacherib departed and dwelt in Nineveh; and, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer smote him with the sword and his son Esar-haddon reigned in his stead.

All this, including the prophecies, was written down long after the event. The historical fact is that Sennacherib's army was not destroyed near Jerusalem, but while it was laying waste the country around and preparing to attack the city, an army of Egyptians and Ethiopians was on its trail under Tirhaka, and it was drawn away and badly cut up near the borders of Egypt. The Assyrian monarch did then return to his capital, but he afterwards suppressed the rebellion of Babylon, and it was twenty years after he was diverted from destroying Jerusalem that he was murdered by his sons, one of whom succeeded him.

It is probably a fact that Hezekiah had a serious

illness from which he recovered, living some years afterwards, no uncommon experience. The writer who was so zealous in attributing everything to "the Lord" and communicating the Lord's purposes through his prophets, makes Isaiah first tell the king to set his house in order for he would die and not live; and then, after the king had implored the Lord to remember how he had walked before him in truth and with a perfect heart and had done that which was good in his sight, the word of the Lord came to the prophet to assure the prince of his people that he had heard his prayer and would heal him. The king was anxious to be assured by a sign, and the shadow was made miraculously to turn back ten steps on the dial of Ahaz.

The only other incident told of Hezekiah and the prophet is the coming of messengers from "Berodach-Baladan," properly Merodach-Baladan, King of Babylon, with presents for the King of Judah, who showed them all the treasures of the temple and the palace, for which the prophet rebuked him and told him that the day would come when all that he and his fathers had laid up in store would be carried away to Babylon, and his descendants would be made captives in the palace of its king. Hezekiah was content, as it was not to come in his day. Undoubtedly this was written by the reviser of these narratives after the event had happened.

Though Hezekiah was said to have done "that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done," he had a troublous reign and remained a vassal of Assyria, while his wicked son Manasseh, who came to the throne at the age of twelve, reigned fifty-five years in peace, so far as this account tells anything about him. All that it does tell is of his iniquities and abominations, in restoring all forms of heathen worship and practice, even in the temple of the Lord as well as in the restored "high places," and shedding innocent blood until he "filled Jerusalem from one end to another." It is a dismal picture and represents a state of things on Mount Zion as dark and bloody as ever prevailed on the hill of Samaria. The final redactor, writing in the midst of the exile, makes this the occasion of a threat of the Lord, by "his servants the prophets," none of whom are named in the reign of Manasseh if any were allowed to live, that he would "bring such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle." He would "wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down"; and he would cast off his "inheritance," deliver them into the hands of their enemies and make them "a prey and a spoil of their enemies." No hope of restoration or a saving remnant is held out.

The dreadful state of things at Jerusalem continued for two years under Manasseh's son Amon,

when his servants conspired against him and put him to death in his own house; but "the people" slew those who conspired against him and made his son Josiah king. He was only eight years old, but his father is said to have been only twenty-four at his death. Josiah, we are told, did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord and walked in all the way of David, turning aside neither to the right nor to the left; but we are informed of nothing that he did until, in the eighteenth year of his reign, the priest Hilkiah found the book of the law in the house of the Lord when preparations were making to repair its "breaches." It was in this interval that the voice of Jeremiah was first lifted up, lamenting the recreancy, backsliding and wickedness of Judah and Jerusalem, and calling them to repentance and obedience to the Lord, as their only hope of salvation.

This discovery of the "book of the law" and the reforms in worship to which it led, were the great event of Josiah's reign, the last before the fate of Judah and Jerusalem was sealed, as that of Israel and Samaria had been sealed just a hundred years before the discovery was made. There is no doubt that this "book of the law" was that which was afterwards extended, with a prelude of discourses by Moses and additions to the commands and ordinances, to form the Book of Deuteronomy. When it was read to Josiah he was filled with alarm and sent to "inquire of the

Lord " from the prophetess Huldah, apparently the only recognised survivor of the prophets in Jerusalem. The zealous redactor of the exile, who knew what had happened, put in her mouth a direful prediction of what was then to come, with the promise that because the king's heart was tender and he had humbled himself and rent his clothes and wept, he should be gathered to his fathers in peace and should not see all the evil that the Lord would "bring upon this place." Perhaps the writer overlooked the fact that in the account under his hand Josiah was killed at Megiddo when he had the presumption to try to intercept the Egyptian army on its way to attack Assyria.

But, after the consulting of the oracle in the person of Huldah, the king is represented as making a clean sweep of the iniquitous worship and its symbols and of various "abominations" that had invaded Mount Zion in the time of his grandfather, even to the "houses of the Sodomites in the house of the Lord." It seems, according to this account, that there had even been sacrifices of children in the valley of the sons of Hinnom, which was turned into "Tophet" for the burning of idols and asherim and other refuse, and that some of the heathenish high places of Solomon had still remained before Jerusalem. A late addition was made to the story to verify the prophecy of the man of God in the time of Jeroboam, that upon the altar which he had raised at Bethel a child of

the house of David, Josiah by name, should sacrifice the priests of the high places and should burn men's bones. The king is also made to save the sepulchre in which the "man of God" from Judah and the old prophet of Bethel were buried together. Then such a passover was kept in Jerusalem as was never known before, but the redactor, whose mind was overwhelmed with the subsequent disasters, could not refrain from interjecting that, "notwithstanding, the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal," but declared that he would remove Judah out of his sight as he had removed Israel, and cast off the city which he had chosen to put his name there. Neither did he omit the authentic statement that Josiah was slain by Pharaoh-Necoh on his way "up against" the King of Assyria and was carried dead in his chariot to be buried in his own sepulchre.

His son Jehoahaz did not have much time for the evil that he did in the sight of the Lord, for this same "Pharaoh-Necoh" captured him within three months and sent him to Egypt to die, putting his brother Eliakim in his place, but with the name of Jehoiakim, and exacting a heavy tribute from the land. Thus Judah and Jerusalem became an unfortunate football between the great powers of the Euphrates and the Nile, which were engaged

in a gigantic struggle for supremacy. Babylon under Nabopolassar, with the aid of Cyaxares of Media, subjugated the kingdom of Assyria, and his son Nebuchadrezzar overwhelmingly defeated Necho at Carchemish, thus transferring the vassalage of Jehoiakim from Egypt to Babylon. Against the protests of the prophet Jeremiah this king rebelled and brought the wrath of Babylon upon Jerusalem, and Judah was devastated by the army of Nebuchadrezzar. The King of Egypt "came no more into the land" for the King of Babylon "had taken, from the brook of Egypt unto the river Euphrates, all that pertained to the King of Egypt."

Jehoiakim "slept with his fathers" and his son Jehoiachin began to reign, but the latter had also only three months in which to do evil in the sight of the Lord, for Nebuchadrezzar was now besieging Jerusalem and the hapless king with his mother and his servants "went out" to him and they were carried away to Babylon with "all the princes and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths," leaving only "the poorest sort of the people of the land." This was in the year 597 B. C., but eleven years remained yet before the final "captivity" and the destruction of Jerusalem. Nebuchadrezzar set another of Josiah's sons on the throne, Mattaniah, to whom he gave the name Zedekiah. We have passed the period of the first compiler of

the Books of Kings and what remains is from the hand of the redactor in the exile. Zedekiah was not obedient to the voice of the great prophet Jeremiah and he had the presumption to rebel against the King of Babylon, of which the immediate result was to bring back the army of Nebuchadrezzar, and there was a siege that reduced Jerusalem to sore famine and to final destruction. The king was captured in an attempt to escape to Jericho, his sons were slain, his eyes were put out, and he was carried captive to Babylon. The walls of Zion were broken down, the temple was stripped of everything of value and left in ruins, and there was another wholesale deportation after the manner of Chaldæan conquests. There was little of such colonising from the East as was made by the Assyrians in the more attractive territory of the North, but Judah and Jerusalem were left to desolation and "astonishment," with a governor who was speedily assassinated, the conspirators and their followers then fleeing to Egypt and taking the prophet Jeremiah with them by force. The result was that while the "ten tribes of Israel" were dispersed and lost, the remnant of Judah returned in half a century, when Cyrus of Persia destroyed Babylon, and in a feeble attempt to rebuild Jerusalem built up Judaism.

The purpose of this long chapter has not been to rehearse the events of the two kingdoms, but to show that this writing is not and was not in-

tended to be history, or a record of facts. In the hands of those who composed it from rude material of diverse origin, and put it in its final form, its purpose was to inculcate and impress a theory, or a doctrine, which is the burden of the whole epic as finally rounded out. In its higher development this was the doctrine that the God of Israel, originally a tribal deity with his abode in the dismal region of Mount Sinai, was the divine power over all the nations, but Israel was his own peculiar people and Judah became his special care when the other tribes broke away and formed a separate kingdom, and proved recreant to his worship and his law. It was for this that he brought calamities upon them and finally destroyed their kingdom and removed them from his sight. Whatever Judah suffered was due to disobedience and infidelity to him, and trust in him would have saved it. Syria or Egypt, Assyria or Babylon, were only instruments in his hands for punishing his people when they would not listen to his voice, as conveyed by the prophets who spoke in his name and by his inspiration.

This was the belief of the prophets themselves, and this was the belief of those who preserved their words, either in their original form or in a modified form, or wrote down what this belief induced them to think must have been said. It was the belief of all those who during the exile and after the return wrought over the mass of

writings that had been saved from the time of the kingdoms, first in the form of "the law," then in the "prophets," which included the legendary and theocratic records from the conquest of Canaan to the "carrying away into captivity," and finally in the addition of various "writings" deemed to be "holy." The one dominating idea at last was that there was no god but Israel's God, and he would yet save a purified remnant of his own beloved people, and bring all other nations, which he had used for their affliction and their discipline, into subjection to them, and would build up a glorified kingdom in the future with the house of David restored. This was a faith that survived the destruction of the two kingdoms and even the failure to rebuild that of Judah after the second great deliverance.

VIII

PROPHETS OF THE KINGDOMS

THE literary prophets of Israel, or those whose utterances, oral or written, have come down to us as part of the great epic of their race, may be said to have developed out of a class of diviners or soothsayers, such as all primitive nations and religions have had. In the earliest writings we have glimpses of those priests, or levis, who consulted Yahweh by means of a mechanism called the ephod, adorned with a symbolical image in the form of a calf or bull, and who received answers by urim and thummim. These implements are represented as being used not only in the days of the "Judges," but in the time of Saul and David. More directly the "word of God" was said to have been imparted by an angel of the Lord, a sort of minor deity acting as a messenger or spokesman. Later this place seems to have been taken by a human being spoken of as a "man of God," supposed to be inspired for his mission. The spirit of the Lord was also said to come upon those who were acting in his behalf, as well as those who spoke for him, even such rough agents of his will as Gideon, Jephthah and Samson.

There were those who were consulted as oracles or seers to whom clairvoyant powers appear to have been imputed, like Deborah under her palm tree between Ramah and Bethel, and Samuel at his dwelling place in Ramah, to whom it was said that the Lord revealed the fact that Saul was coming to inquire after stray asses. A late editor of the account takes occasion to note that he that was called a prophet in his day had been before-time called a seer. There were also said to be in the time of Samuel schools or conventicles in which the neophytes were called "sons of prophets," and the verb used for their "propheying" signified crying out in ecstatic fashion, something like the "speaking with tongues" of a much later time. It is evident that they were wont to work themselves into a religious frenzy, which sometimes infected the bystanders. It was this that led to the proverbial query "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

"Prophet" came to mean one who spoke or acted in the name of "the Lord" (Yahweh), and Samuel in anointing and guiding the first king of Israel is the earliest who appears distinctly in that role. Writers of a time long after applied the term to Abraham and Moses, but its significance is plainly brought out where it is said that the Lord told Moses, when he pleaded that he was not eloquent, that Aaron should be to him instead of a mouth and should be his "prophet." After

David became king, Nathan appears as a prophet to reveal to him the purposes of the Lord and to rebuke him in the case of the wrong done to Uriah the Hittite. We hear of no prophet in the time of Solomon until the Ephraimite rebellion, which, according to the doctrine developed later, must be accounted for as a retribution for the sins of that king in setting up the worship of heathen gods in his latter days, and must have been announced beforehand in the name of God. For that purpose Ahijah appears, whose abode was said to be at the old sanctuary of Shiloh.

The symbolical action of this prophet in rending his new garment into twelve pieces and giving ten of them to Jeroboam was a kind of performance sometimes credited to later prophets, as a means of giving emphasis or illustration to their messages. These things may not have been actually done, for there was much use of figurative language and poetical imagery, not only by those who told of the words and deeds of prophets, but in what purport to be their own statements. Their symbolism like their visions, was usually assumed for effect. It may be that at the time of the disastrous expedition of Ahab and Jehoshaphat against the Syrians at Ramoth-Gilead, Zedekiah made him horns of iron to show how the kings would punish the enemy until he was "consumed," but it is hardly more likely than that Micaiah saw the visions that he described. It is not to be sup-

posed that Amos actually saw the basket of summer fruit which he said the Lord God showed him, or that he really saw the Lord standing upon the altar telling him to smite the lintel of the door that the posts may shake. When Isaiah tells how his lips were purged by a live coal taken from the altar by a seraph he is not relating a matter of fact, and it may be doubted whether he walked naked and barefoot three years "for a sign and a wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia." When he spoke of a young woman having a child to be named "God with us" to illustrate the time within which Judah would be relieved from the attack of Israel and Syria, or of naming a child of his own to symbolise the approaching destruction of Damascus by Assyria, he was not telling family history or prefiguring remote events.

A number of symbolical acts were imputed to Jeremiah, such as putting on a yoke to represent the coming subjugation of his people and shattering a potter's earthen vessel to illustrate how the Lord would smash Jerusalem, but it does not follow that he literally did these things. Certainly, when he said that in obedience to the word of the Lord he got a linen girdle and took it to Euphrates and hid it in a hole of the rock, and after many days went again and found it marred and "profitable for nothing," to show how the pride of Judah was to be marred and its people to be carried away captive to the Euphrates, the

statement ascribed to him was not meant to be understood as relating a fact. Very likely the narrative of buying a field from his uncle at Anathoth as a refuge in anticipation of the destruction of Jerusalem was a bit of illustrative fiction to impress the belief that, while the land would be made desolate, there would be a rescue of the purified people after many days and that houses and fields and vineyards would "yet again be bought in this land."

We need to make allowance for ancient and Oriental modes of expression. There is another thing for which we must make allowance in judging of this prophetic literature. Much of that which was preserved in the great epic was no doubt written down by the prophets themselves before or after its oral utterance, where it was uttered at all under the circumstances related, but some of it was undoubtedly written out by others from hearsay or tradition, in some cases invented by these writers. During a period of nearly two centuries between the earliest of these and the devastation of Judah by Nebuchadrezzar these utterances must have been collected at Jerusalem, including those that had their origin in the Northern Kingdom before the destruction of Samaria. Then they were carried away to Babylon in more or less confusion and cherished by devout scribes, who had fifty years in which to work over and to arrange and tran-

scribe the mass of precious material. In this work they had the light of events now past to guide them, and there is much evidence that they felt no scruple in modifying and adapting what they had, to support their beliefs and their religious faith.

The material of the prophecies was evidently in disorder and the means of identifying the time and place of production and the authorship of various parts of it, were imperfect. The redactors and copyists were not skilful and the final arrangement was defective. In most cases no logical or chronological order was observed, and passages were credited to certain prophets, even the greatest of them, which could not have been their work. Take as a conspicuous example the Book of Isaiah. Nothing after the thirty-ninth chapter, in the modern division into chapter and verse, could have come from the prophet of the time of Ahaz and Hezekiah. That section belongs to the end of the exile and after. The last four chapters of that which precedes chapter forty, relating to Sennacherib's invasion, the sickness of Hezekiah and the mission from Merodach-Baladan of Babylon, are taken bodily from the Book of Kings. What precedes these is badly arranged and contains at least one passage that is older than Isaiah's time and several that are later, later even than the exile, the final redaction having been made long

after the return, when many stray fragments of prophecy were misplaced or purposely interpolated in the ancient setting.

Perhaps the oldest of the oracles preserved in writing, unless we regard as such the vaticinations put in the mouth of Balaam in the Book of Numbers, is the poetical tirade against Moab in the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of Isaiah, which is there designated as the word spoken by the Lord concerning Moab in time past. It is a pleasing conjecture that this may have come from the ancient prophet Jonah, who is referred to in the Book of Kings, where Jeroboam II is said to have restored the border of Israel, probably including the suppression of Moab, "according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet which was of Gath-hepher."

But the earliest complete "prophecy" labelled with the name of its author, is that of Amos the herdsman of Tekoa in Judah, who went to Beth-el in Israel in the time of Jeroboam II, to denounce the iniquities that were flagrant in that kingdom, and to utter warnings of the punishment that awaited the guilty realm. The time of this was about 760 B. C., after the Assyrians had begun their campaigns of conquest in the West and there were many premonitions of the fate that impended over the puny nations which were on the track of the armies that passed between the empires of the

Euphrates and the Nile. Amos avowed that he was not by profession a prophet but a herdsman and a dresser of Sycamore trees, but the Lord had taken him from following the flock and sent him to "prophesy unto Israel." His work is highly poetical and full of burning ardour. He regarded the moving of the armies of Assyria as a menace of the Lord to the sinful nations and especially to Israel, for its recreancy to the covenant with Jacob and the worship of the God who had brought his people out of Egypt and given them their goodly land.

The prophet begins with rhapsodical visions of the retribution that is coming upon Damascus of Syria, upon Gaza of the Philistines, upon Tyre, upon Ammon and Moab, and even upon Judah, which had rejected the law of the Lord; but his fiercest denunciations were reserved for Israel, which had sold the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes, and had been guilty of injustice, fraud, oppression of the poor and all iniquity. The Lord had borne with their sins and tried them with penalties until his patience was exhausted, and now he threatened them with destruction and captivity. The prophet used much figurative language and indulged in visions, but it was evidently the Assyrian army that he regarded as the coming scourge, and he knew what such an army of conquest from the mighty East must mean, unless the angry God that was bringing it

on was placated by repentance and submission. The whole doctrine of the prophets was summed up in these words: "Shall evil befall a city and the Lord hath not done it? Surely the Lord God will do nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets."

But never did the prophets of Israel fail in their faith in the ultimate rescue and salvation of the Lord's people. A purified remnant would surely be restored to build up his kingdom, and their enemies would be destroyed or brought into subjection to their rule. So, after the denunciation and threats, said to have been delivered at Bethel and to have resulted in a charge of conspiracy and a warning to flee into the land of Judah, this message was concluded with a promise that the tabernacle of David should be raised up again and repaired, the people should be brought from their captivity, rebuild their waste cities, plant vineyards and make gardens, and they "shall no more be plucked out of their land which I have given them, said the Lord God." This was undoubtedly added after the exile.

The next prophet in order of time was Hosea, who was of the kingdom of Israel over which the shadow of doom was darkening, for already the army of Tiglath-Pileser was ravaging the surrounding country. Damascus and Tyre had been brought into subjection to him and Samaria was menaced. The first three chapters of the Book

of Hosea, as it is now divided, must have been written before the end of the dynasty of Jehu, which ceased with the assassination of the son of Jeroboam II, within six months of that king's death. The others relate to the time of Menahem, who succeeded to the throne by speedily assassinating the assassin, and who reigned ten years. No events are referred to so late as the league between Israel and Syria against Judah, about 736 B. C. There is no reason to assume that there was personal experience in the symbolism of the first chapters, which rather coarsely represents the relation of Israel and her Lord as that of an unfaithful wife and her husband, with threats of exposure and disgrace and promise of renewed union and love after repentance. Imagery of that kind is common in the prophetic utterances, heathen worship and infidelity to the law of the Lord being characterised as "whoredom."

This prophecy is made up of alternations of rebuke and pleading and promise, in which the author puts his words into the mouth of the Lord, while assuming that the Lord puts the words into his mouth. He is deeply depressed by the idolatry and the iniquity of the people, and the dreadful peril, which he believed to be due to the resentment and anger of their God, who was bringing destruction upon them as a punishment which there seemed to be no hope of averting.

There proved to be no way of averting the calamity, for the Assyrian conquests went on, and it was not many years before they swept over Israel, and Samaria was destroyed. This part of the heritage of Jacob was never restored, though its restoration was often promised.

The menace to Judah was less direct and it was nearly a hundred and forty years before a like devastation came to that kingdom, but similar use was made of the danger by the prophets in their desperate efforts to induce the people and their rulers to abandon their evil ways and obey the Lord, whose threats and promises the prophets uttered. That and that alone, they devoutly believed, would save the nation and make it great and glorious, in spite of all its enemies could do, however seemingly powerful. These were only instruments in the hands of Israel's God, who was the source of all power. The greatest of the prophets of Judah, as the inevitable crisis made its slow way from the East, was Isaiah, who beginning in the time of Jotham, about 740 B. C., was a mentor of the kings until the death of Hezekiah, more than forty years later, a period covering the Assyrian conquests of Syria and Samaria and the attack of Sennacherib upon Judah, when Jerusalem narrowly escaped the fate that afterwards came from Babylon.

The book which contains such utterances of this great prophet as were preserved is a com-

posite work, even more difficult to analyse than the Pentateuch; and, after all the erudition and research that have been lavished upon it, there is much uncertainty as to the source and the application of many passages. The last twenty-seven chapters, as it stands in our versions, is to be relegated to the close of the exile and later. The historical passage relating to the invasion of Sennacherib, the sickness of Hezekiah and the visit of the emissaries of Merodach-Baladan, as has been already stated, is conveyed bodily from the Book of Kings, with the interpolation of a kind of psalm designated as "the writing of Hezekiah when he had been sick and had recovered of his sickness." The apocalyptic passage contained in chapters twenty-four to twenty-seven, inclusive, belong to the time at the end of the exile when Assyria and Babylon had been destroyed and high hopes were cherished of a restoration of the kingdom, which should extend from "the flood of the River unto the brook of Egypt," into which the exiles and outcasts should be gathered, with their place of worship in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

The succession of compilers, revisers and editors of this material made use of such authentic utterances of Isaiah as they had that suited their purpose, but they did not observe the order of events or verify the occasions for their use, and they did not hesitate to modify and adapt them, or to in-

introduce extraneous matter of later origin. Most of this, however, has the impress of that prophetic doctrine of which Isaiah and Jeremiah were the greatest exemplars. It was intended to show how their warnings had been justified and their predictions verified, and it reiterated with new emphasis the promise of a restoration that had begun and a glory and power that were hoped for.

The first chapter of Isaiah which forms an impressive exordium to the collection is a late production of the prophet, perhaps of the time of the relapse after the death of Hezekiah, touched by a still later hand, for it speaks of revolt, estrangement and backsliding from the Holy One of Israel, and refers to a retribution that has already come and a redemption that shall yet make of Zion "the city of righteousness, the faithful city," when all that forsake the Lord shall be consumed. It is followed by four chapters which are regarded as genuine beyond doubt and among the earlier utterances of the prophet, though they contain evidences of late revision, when it could be said that "Jerusalem is ruined and Judah is fallen." It implies idolatry and heathen practices in the land, as well as pride and folly and wickedness, which the Lord is to purge away in his wrath with the "blast of judgment," until those that are left among the living in Jerusalem shall be called holy. The fifth chapter contains the beautiful allegory of the vineyard which brought forth only

wild grapes and further denunciation of woes and penalties for the recreancy of the Lord's people, whom he had smitten and against whom his hand is "stretched out still."

Some later oracles are prefaced by the statement of the prophet's first call to his mission by a vision in the temple "in the year that King Uzziah died." This collection begins with the first that is clearly associated with a definite historical event, the alliance of Israel under Pekah and Syria under Rezin against Judah in the time of Ahaz. At that time the Assyrians under Tiglath-Pileser were threatening Syria and Ahaz hired that monarch with the treasures of the temple to save him "out of the hand of the King of Syria and out of the hand of the King of Israel." As Tiglath-Pileser was already in possession of Damascus there is no doubt that this was what averted the danger from Jerusalem.

Isaiah is represented as flouting the danger from these "two tails of smoking firebrands" and predicting that before a child yet to be born should come to the age of knowing "to refuse the evil and choose the good," the land of the two kings whom Ahaz abhorred would be forsaken. This is followed by further prophesying that the Lord would call the fly from Egypt and the bee from Assyria to desolate the offending land. But mingled with this are later poetical fragments, in which the burden of prophecy is the promise of restoration after

completed penalties, when the throne of David should be restored under an ideal prince of peace.

While the most is made of the menace of Assyria against Damascus and Samaria as a warning to Jerusalem, it is the doctrine of the prophet that the Assyrian is only a "rod of anger" and a "staff of indignation" in the hand of the Lord, and that he will be punished in his turn for arrogating to himself the power of which he is only the instrument. It is as if the axe should boast itself against him that heweth therewith, the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it, or the rod shake them that lift it up. The Lord would chastise Assyria and restore a remnant of his people. The passage following the graphic picture of the coming on of the host and the devastation the Lord would bring about, which tells of a time when an ideal king from the stock of Jesse should reign in righteousness and peace, and the remnant of the scattered people would be recalled from the four corners of the earth to subjugate their enemies, might be regarded as a prophetic vision of Isaiah, but it is far more likely to be the offspring of the dreams of the post-exilic time. It is certain that that which follows, relating to the doom of Babylon, was not written before the time of the attack of Cyrus. How much of the various denunciations of doom upon the nations hostile to "the people of God" came from Isaiah, and how much from those who intermingled his

writings with their own, it is impossible to determine. That relating to Egypt certainly refers to events later than his time, and it ends with the strange prediction of an alliance between Egypt, Assyria and Israel, who were to have the common blessing of the Lord in the midst of the earth: "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands and Israel mine inheritance." This is far from the manner and spirit of the prophet who denounced all alliance with other nations or dependence upon their help, and urged complete reliance upon the God who made Israel his own peculiar care and would make it the one great nation of the earth if it obeyed him and kept his law.

A definite relation to history in the oracles of Isaiah appears again in the later chapters, beginning with the twenty-eighth, sometimes designated as the "Assyrian cycle." Though this passage is introduced by an older fragment pronouncing woe upon Samaria as "the crown of the drunkards of Ephraim," it relates in general to the time of the "overflowing scourge" of Sennacherib's army, which was to be used to chastise and correct Judah, but would not be permitted to destroy Jerusalem. Here the turning of Hezekiah to Egypt for help against the overpowering army from the East is distinctly condemned. We hear again that terrible voice denouncing the covenant with Sheol and the agreement with death which the rulers

of Jerusalem seemed to have made, portraying the might and anger of an outraged God, and depicting the retribution that he was bringing upon an offending people. The language flows like a torrent and roars like a cataract, but sometimes it sinks into a tone of pleading, and again rises into exultation over a final restoration when the vengeance of the Lord should be complete and "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."

There is always reason for regarding these exultant passages as late interpolations, belonging to the time when there was a prospect that "the ransomed of the Lord" were about to return and "come with singing unto Zion," and when there was hope that everlasting joy was to be upon their heads in the restored kingdom. There is a prosaic ending, in the redactor's transcript from the Book of Kings of the account of Sennacherib's sudden diversion from his attack upon Jerusalem. Of the fate of the prophet when this great crisis was over and the land relapsed into quietness and peace we know nothing; but it may be that his blood was mingled with that with which Manasseh filled Jerusalem after the death of his father.

There was a "minor prophet" in the time of Isaiah some of whose utterances were preserved. This was Micah of Morasheth on the border of Philistia, who was also aroused to righteous indignation by the iniquities of Samaria and Jerusalem,

and regarded the Assyrian menace as a portent of punishment. The first three chapters of the book bearing this name are of unquestioned authenticity and their contents must have preceded the destruction of Samaria, but the rest is a dubious mixture. The consolatory verses at the beginning of Chapter four are a late interpolation and almost a paraphrase of the beginning of the second Chapter of Isaiah. The rest of Chapter four and all of Chapter five is a blending of inharmonious elements, and if originally from the same source was mangled by late editing. Chapter six and the beginning of seven appear to reflect the dismal time of Manasseh and may be from the same hand as the first chapters, but it is certain that the last chapter from verse seven to the end was not earlier than the time of anticipated restoration at the end of the exile.

During the long reign of Manasseh, which was characterised by relapse to the grosser form of the worship of Yahweh, akin to that of Baal, and perhaps mingled with it, and by reaction against the exacting ethical standard taught in Hezekiah's time, there was no voice of admonition and warning that has been transmitted, unless it be that of Micah. One oracle of that period there is, labelled with the name of Nahum the Elkoshite. Some authorities place Elkosh in Galilee, but it does not matter. Nahum's "vision" was a fierce threat of the destruction of Nineveh

by the Lord, whose people Assyria had so outraged, and it begins with a fervid portrayal of the might of that avenging deity when his wrath was excited. It is mainly poetical in structure and abounds in graphic imagery of the forces of destruction with which "the Lord" would lash the "bloody city." It was written after the conquest of Egypt and the destruction of Thebes, or "No-amon," by the Assyrians, and at a time when Nineveh was threatened from the East; but the city was not destroyed until long after, by Nabopolassar of Babylon.

After the short reign of Manasseh's son Amon, and while the child Josiah occupied the throne of Judah, perhaps under the guidance of the temple priests, there was a revival of prophecy. We hear nothing of it until the boy king had reigned a dozen years or more and was about twenty years of age. It was then that the great champion of theocracy, Jeremiah, appeared, and from that time he attended the agonies of the kingdom until it expired under the punitive assaults of Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon; but there were two "minor prophets," contemporary with the earlier and middle part of his career, some of whose utterances were considered worthy of preservation through the subsequent vicissitudes of this remarkable literature.

Josiah's reign began in 640 B. C., and it was not until 622 that the book of the law was said to

have been found in the temple, the discovery of which was followed by a drastic reform in the worship of Yahweh. This was now centered at Jerusalem, and that in the "high places" was wiped out. Zephaniah is represented as being a descendant in the fourth generation from Hezekiah, presumably the king, the great grandfather of Josiah. It must have been before the reforms of Josiah that the word of the Lord is said to have come to Zephaniah proclaiming destruction of all the earth on a great and terrible "day of the Lord's wrath," on account of the sinfulness even of Jerusalem. It is intimated that the "fierce anger" may be averted from that city if its people will "gather themselves" and seek righteousness and meekness. Some regard this intimation as a later addition, and the threats against the nations hostile to Judah as from a different source. At all events, the promise of restoration of a dispersed people and the song of rejoicing with which this prophecy ends are an addition of the time of the exile or later. It is probable that the genuine oracle of Zephaniah with its menace of destruction, intended to terrify the people into turning to the Lord for escape, was incited by the invasion of Scythians in Western Asia about 628 B. C.

It was after Babylon had gained the ascendancy in the East and was starting westward on its career of conquest, in which Egypt was defeated at

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Carchemish and all the smaller nations were reduced to a state of vassalage, that "the burden which Habakkuk did see" appeared. It is contained in two of the three chapters to which his name is attached, the third, or "prayer of Habakkuk the prophet," being a psalm appended after the return from exile. This "burden" is not altogether homogeneous and its parts are disarranged, but its chief feature is a graphic description of the Chaldean army, which the Lord is to bring over the land for its chastisement. The prophet appears to remonstrate against the policy of letting the wicked swallow up the man that is more righteous than he, and is told to write the vision, wherein woe is pronounced upon one who may, perhaps, figuratively represent that "bitter and hasty nation" which was to be used as a scourge and then humiliated for serving the purpose to which it was incited by divine wrath. Those who assume to interpret the enigmatical language are not agreed as to its application, but it is certainly intended to magnify the God of Israel and induce submission to his authority as expressed by his prophets.

The stage is cleared for the entrance of the last and in some respects the greatest of the prophets of the kingdoms, as distinguished from those of the exile and after. Jeremiah was of the priests of Anathoth in Benjamin. To him "the word of the Lord came" in the thirteenth year

of the reign of Josiah, and sent him to Jerusalem to "cry in the ears of the City," saying "Thus saith the Lord." We must recognise the fact, to start with, that what is called "The Book of the prophet Jeremiah," like the "Books of Moses" and the "Book of Isaiah," is a late compilation, labelled with his name and containing in a more or less mutilated and modified form such of his utterances as were preserved in writing. But it contains many fragments of later oracles and other extraneous matter, some of it intended to explain the circumstances to which the prophecies relate. The purpose of this is not historical but doctrinal, in support of the central idea of the great epic composition, that Israel had been chosen and cherished by its God Yahweh, who was the creator and lord of all the earth, that the calamity to which it had come was due to its failure to obey his commands and be submissive to his will and faithful to his worship, that other nations were used as a scourge to punish the recreant and rebellious and would be punished in their turn for arrogating the power and credit to themselves, while a chastened and purified remnant of God's people would be restored and reunited under a king of the house of David, and would rule the world in righteousness and peace under the guidance of the Almighty One.

This conception began with the prophets, who embodied the national pride and ambition and

deemed themselves inspired by the deity to utter his own words, was developed and cherished through the long exile and after the restoration, and became the chief article of faith and hope while the humiliated people struggled in galling subjection successively to Persia and Greece. It was under its influence that all the old writings were painfully wrought over and welded into a sacred epic to sustain the indomitable spirit of Judaism. One of the chief pillars of this great fabric is this book of Jeremiah. It was the product of a succession of compilations and revisions finally moulded into one as late as the third century B. C.

How much of it consists of the actual utterances or writings of the prophet cannot be determined with certainty, but allusions to events, circumstances and conditions in the exile and long after, are easily traced, and the general character of the collection is well established. Those who gave it the final impress could look back upon the trials and calamities of the nation through the preceding centuries, realise the devastation and desolation of the land and the resistless power that had trodden it down, and could only comfort themselves with the conviction that it was due to the sin and disobedience of the people and their rulers, and that it was only necessary to profit by the chastisement and rely upon the unseen potentate that must still be their God and theirs only,

to receive the benefit of the promises they believed him to have made to their fathers and repeated from age to age through his prophets.

When Jeremiah first appeared at Jerusalem the conditions left after the reign of Manasseh and Amon had not materially changed, and his earlier utterances, scattered in disorder through the first twenty chapters of the book, have the familiar tone of reproach, remonstrance and threat, of lamentation and mourning, heated to burning intensity. Rumours of the Scythian invasion from the North gave point to the menace of destruction, to be averted only by submission to the Lord. What part the prophet may have taken in the promulgation of the newly found version of the law and the reforms that followed through the action of Josiah, instigated by the priests, is left in profound obscurity. It is significant that neither he nor his prophesying is mentioned in the Book of Kings and that none of the oracles attributed to him relate to this part of Josiah's reign or make any direct reference to it. It is only after the untimely death of that king that the prophet's voice is again heard in warning and menace, and then appalling danger is gathering in the East. The kings of Judah had continued to be tributary to Assyria, though apparently free from direct oppression, but after Josiah lost his life in the rash attempt to intercept the Egyptian army under Necho at Megiddo, that monarch

seized his son Jehoahaz, after he had nominally reigned three months, and carried him away to Egypt, making his brother king under the name of Jehoiakim.

There is but one reference to Jehoahaz in Jeremiah, and there he is contemptuously called Shal-lum, and a prediction is interjected that he should die "in the place whither they have led him captive." There are several references to Jehoiakim, who had first paid tribute to Egypt for the safety of his kingdom, but after the battle of Carchemish had become a vassal of Babylon and three years later revolted and brought the wrath of Nebuchadrezzar upon his country. This led to the ravaging of Judah and the siege of Jerusalem, and three months after the death of Jehoiakim his son Jehoiachin surrendered. There was a deportation to Babylon of princes and priests and men of war. Among these the name of Mattaniah, a son of Josiah, appears, but according to the record he was made King of Judah by Nebuchadrezzar, with the name of Zedekiah, and was destined to be the last of the line. It was his presumption in revolting and relying upon the help of Egypt that led to the return of the Chaldean army, the devastation of the country, the destruction of Jerusalem after a long siege, and the final deportation in 586 B. C.

During all the stirring and critical events of the last twenty years of the Kingdom of Judah,

Jeremiah was unwearied in his denunciation of the wickedness of the people and the presumption of the rulers, and brought persecution and abuse upon himself by advocating submission to Babylon and condemning trust in Egypt or any other earthly power.

The most surely authentic collection of the prophet's utterances, as written out probably in his own time, but somewhat revised afterwards, contain few distinct allusions to historical events, but they come down to his threats of the destruction of Jerusalem and the desolation of Judah by Nebuchadrezzar's army and the "carrying away" to Babylon, which would be its inevitable sequel. This collection closes with what purports to be an account of his seizure by one of the king's officers and his confinement in the stocks for prophesying such a calamity. He is represented as fiercely repeating the threat and denouncing captivity and death upon his persecutor in the name of the Lord, and then complaining in his despair that the Lord had deceived him and brought him into humiliation, and as cursing the day wherein he was born.

But immediately following this collection is another and later one which begins with the statement that this same officer, Pashur, and another were sent by King Zedekiah to implore the prophet to inquire of the Lord regarding the attack of Nebuchadrezzar upon Jerusalem.

This was at the time of the final siege, though earlier events are afterwards referred to. The reply is that the Lord will fight on the side of the Chaldeans, destroy the city, and deliver the people into the hand of the King of Babylon. Those who resisted he would smite without pity and without mercy, and only those who yielded would have a chance of life. This is out of its proper order and is followed by some disconnected fragments relating to the previous kings since Josiah. After a brief exordium threatening the kings of Judah generally if they would not hear the words of the Lord, it is said that "Shallum" (Jehoahaz) shall die in the land to which he has been carried, but is not to be wept for. Neither was there to be lamentation for Jehoiakim, who would have the "burial of an ass" and be cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem. Jehoiachin, or Jeconiah, referred to as "Coniah," the Lord would "pluck hence and deliver to the King of Babylon" and no man of his seed should prosper sitting upon the throne of David.

No doubt these were retrospective prophecies written after the event, and not the words of Jeremiah. What follows them is certainly of late origin, as are all the passages telling of the days to come when the Lord would gather his people from the countries into which he had driven them and would establish over

them a "righteous Branch" of David to execute judgment and justice. The violent denunciation of the false prophets is sufficiently characteristic to be genuine, at least in substance, and the symbolism of the baskets of figs may have been found among the writings of the prophet. This latter accords with the view imputed to him that those who had been deported with Jehoiachin were a saving remnant and those who were left behind were doomed. Farther on there is what purports to be a letter of the prophet to the "elders" in captivity, telling them to make themselves at home where they are and promising restoration after seventy years. This is also accompanied by denunciation of the false prophets. The chapter is a disconnected production which may have had a genuine basis.

Those portions of the Book of Jeremiah comprised in chapters xxvi to xxix and xxxiv to xlv are of a quasi historical character and contain statements of events and the prophet's part in them, for which there may have been written material. In a measure they supplement the Book of Kings and may have come from the hand of the compiler of its latest chapters during the exile. There is a conjecture that Baruch, who is said in the time of Jehoiakim to have written out the words which the Lord had spoken unto Jeremiah "against Israel and against Judah and against all the nations" from

the days of Josiah, and to have re-written them with additions when the roll was burnt by the king, and who was carried away to Egypt with the prophet after the siege, was the latest compiler of the annals of the Kings and the author in their original form of these historical passages relating to the last days of the kingdom and giving an account of Jeremiah's utterances, his treatment by the household of Zedekiah and by the king himself. Baruch is supposed to have escaped from Egypt and made his way to Babylon, where he was active in putting these writings into form.

The closing chapter of the Book of Jeremiah is taken bodily from the end of the second Book of Kings, but before that there is a further account of the sequel to the siege, the tumult which followed, the assassination of the governor appointed by Nebuchadrezzar's officer, the choice given to the prophet to go with the captives or to stay behind, his failure to induce those who stayed to remain in the deserted land, and his forcible abduction from Bethlehem, where they had gathered, to Egypt. It would seem that Baruch or some one else, either preserved the fierce tirades of the prophet against the conduct of the refugees in the borders of Egypt or imputed to him those which he was presumed to have uttered. At last his uncompromising voice was silenced and tradition said that he was

stoned to death by the people whose practices he persisted in denouncing.

There is no doubt that the passages relating to the restoration of Israel and the destruction of its enemies in the days to come, contained in chapters xxx to xxxiii and xlvi to li, with the passage interpolated as chapter xxv, in the book as divided in modern versions, were in the main of late production, in the exile and after, and were retrospective in their prophecy of events that were then past. But they were elaborations of a central idea of Jeremiah's utterances, which served as a pattern and inspiration for writers of the time when the hope was dominant that the Lord would restore the kingdom, gather all the scattered children of the household of Israel from among the nations, and set up a righteous king of the line of David on Mount Zion who would rule in submission to Yahweh's guidance. This mingling of Jeremiah's genuine utterances with those imputed to him long after serves as a bridge from the calamity, humiliation and despair of Judah's devastation and Jerusalem's desolation, over the gulf of exile by the streams of Babylon, to the time of restoration and hope, when the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt, the temple was renewed and the "laws of Moses" were developed into a system of ritual worship unknown before.

There is nowhere else in human history any

production of man's genius more intense in expression than the so-called prophecies of Jeremiah, and that intensity was inspired by the circumstances of the time and the ardent nature of the man. He was a fervent believer in the doctrine he preached, and an intense lover of his country, which he saw in the agonies of dissolution from the attack of a powerful enemy. His judgment and foresight taught him that resistance to the armies of Babylon was useless, that a league of the petty nations for defence was futile, and that reliance upon Egypt for rescue was folly. But with all his soul he believed that this situation was brought about by Israel's God as a punishment of his recreant and stiff-necked people, who persisted in worshipping other gods, in bowing down to idols and neglecting the principles of conduct inculcated by the prophets, whose words were put in their mouth by God himself.

He believed that if the people would repent and return to their allegiance to the power that had made a covenant with their fathers and given them all they had, his anger would be placated, his mercy would be excited, his love would be regained and he would turn back their enemies and restore them to safety and happiness as a nation. But he was convinced after years of appeal, of warning and of threats and promises, that the case was hopeless. They must undergo a terrible retribution which would chastise the

guilt out of them and destroy the incorrigible, but a purified remnant would be saved and restored, for Israel's God could not be utterly defeated and his purposes could not finally fail. Israel had been his care for a thousand years, and wayward as it was, it would be chastened and made triumphant in the end.

It was the prophet's conception of deity and of his relation to mankind, especially his relation to his own peculiar people, that gave such intensity to his utterances. Israel's God was loving and merciful when obeyed and submissively worshipped, but he was fiercely jealous of other gods and excited to wrath and indignation when his own beloved people fell away to them. When his anger was aroused he was vengeful and ruthless, and he controlled all the powers of nature and of nations and would use them in his fury for punishment and destruction. The language of warning and of menace was filled with the most graphic use of figure and imagery. The Lord would sweep over the land in whirlwind and fire; he would waste with famine and destroy with pestilence; he would slay with the sword and cover the land with men's bones; he would bring armies from afar like devouring locusts and birds of prey; he would raven like wolves and lions; he would roar and howl and bring tempest and darkness and fill the world with terror and dismay, because of the iniquities, the disobedience

and the wilfulness of his people, who showed such base ingratitude.

No doubt the prophet imputed his own feelings to his God, but he believed that they came from that source and that he was uttering the words that Jehovah (Yahweh) inspired within him. He could not separate himself from "the Lord." There were other prophets who presumed to speak in the same name in giving different counsel, and he did not hesitate to denounce them as deceivers and liars and threaten them with disaster and death, still imputing his own words to the outraged deity. Naturally, the words of these other prophets were seldom preserved and then only to vindicate the utterances of those who were regarded as the true prophets of God.

The most remarkable thing about these Hebrew seers, with their conceptions, in many respects crude and barbarous, of the deity and of the worldly destiny of their own nation, is the lofty ethical principles which they taught as the word of God, the principles of truth and justice, of kindness and mercy, the doctrine of everlasting righteousness, which was far above the standard of any other ancient people and of a validity that no lapse of time can impair. That is the peculiar contribution that the Hebrew genius made to mankind, and it imparted a kind of sanctity to the whole body of the literature which was bound

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up together as the full expression of that genius. Its knowledge of the world was small, its conception of deity was rude, its idea of worship was far from enlightened, but it grasped the moral law of the universe with a firmness that has never been relaxed.

IX

PROPHETS OF THE EXILE AND AFTER

IN those strange times when even enlightened people accepted the ancient Jewish doctrine that the scriptures of the Hebrews contained nothing but divine truth, to be implicitly believed as such, and that the writers thereof were inspired by the deity and therefore incapable of error, it was assumed that the long period of exile by the rivers of Babylon was one of literary darkness, illumined only by the visions and prophetic discourses of Ezekiel. Intelligent study has revealed the fact that it was a busy time for the Hebrew genius, for the brains of Judah had been deported from Jerusalem. The compiler of the Book of Kings said that when Jehoiachin was carried away all the chief men of the land went with him and "all the men of might even seven thousand, and the craftsmen and smiths a thousand." A late reviser raised the number of captives to ten thousand and said that "none remained save the poorest sort of the people of the land." Eleven years later, when Nebuchadrezzar's army destroyed Jerusalem and Zedekiah was carried away, it is said that "the residue of

the multitude did Nebuzaradan the Captain of the Guard carry away captive," and only the poorest of the land were left "to be vinedressers and husbandmen."

This is an exaggerated statement, but there is no doubt that the priests and scribes were deported and they took the literary treasures of the temple with them and had plenty of time to work them over in their exile. These were evidently in disorder and confusion and were not duly labelled; there was lack of skill in arranging and editing them, and the process was not completed until long after. It was then that the tales of the Judges were connected together with links of theocratic doctrine, and the books of Samuel and Kings were revised in the light of what had happened in the eventful period since David and Solomon. The utterances of the great prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, which were so indissolubly associated with the events of the most critical part of that history, were unskilfully arranged, interlarded with other material and so adapted as to be justified by the consequences that they foreshadowed; but they were left open to later enlargement and recension, when there was hope that the promise of redemption for the nation and the establishment of an everlasting kingdom under a scion of the house of David was to be fulfilled.

There was more literary activity in the time of

the exile than ever before, but it was concentrated in the community of captives and wrought largely from material of the past. But one great work there was to link the past with the future in the epic progress of the peculiar people. Among those carried away with Jehoiachin was a priest named Ezekiel, who became a prophet among the exiles. He appears to have done his own writing with systematic care, and it was preserved with little mutilation or revision until securely embalmed in the literature that was finally consecrated against further change. It is peculiarly interesting, not only for its reflection of the past and its foreshadowing of the future, and its own isolation in both time and place from the current of Jewish life, but as an example of the prophetic method in its extreme development. It requires only a reasonable freedom from traditional prepossessions and a moderate exercise of common sense to see in the "Book of the Prophet Ezekiel" a very human and artfully wrought literary production. It contains the germs of the apocalyptic style of a later time and of the fuller development of the Jewish law. In its visions and symbolism and its reproductions of the words of "the Lord," it is no more to be taken in a literal sense than the scenes of Greek tragedy or the imaginings of Dante or Bunyan.

Just when this book was written and how long it occupied the author are matters of mere con-

jecture, but its character indicates a continuous work undertaken after the events which are viewed in retrospect with a prophetic eye. Now and again the writer gives an impression of actuality by fixing specific dates for his vision or the coming to him of the "word of the Lord," but that was part of his art. In one place, when speaking of the siege of Jerusalem as a coming event, he makes a distinct allusion to the blindness of Zedekiah after he was carried to Babylon. These dates are reckoned from the first deportation, when the prophet himself was carried away with Jehoiachin, and it may be that the "thirtieth year" referred to in the first verse, which has been a puzzle to students, was that in which the writing was completed, for it is detached from what immediately follows, where Ezekiel the priest is spoken of in the third person. It was apparently prefixed when the work was finished.

The vision of God which is so elaborately described, as a prelude to prophecy, is so obviously imaginary as not to be seriously discussed as anything else. Never was there such a deity mounted in such a chariot, designed after the manner of Babylonian art, and there never was such a vision except in the waking dreams of an imaginative writer; but it was an effective device for introducing the commission of the prophet, as he conceived it to be, as the Lord's watchman unto the house of Israel in its days of exile. He

was to remind that "house" of the evil record which had brought it to desolation and ruin and left it in humiliation and despair, and then to cheer it with hopes of restoration and greatness yet to come, if it returned to its allegiance to the God of Jacob, submitted to his authority and obeyed his law. That God was their ruler, against whom they had basely rebelled, and he sought to be their ruler again and would joyfully gather them from among the nations and establish a righteous and benign kingdom with a prince after his own heart on Mount Zion, when they had been purified by chastisement.

So the prophet goes back in imagination to the siege, when Jerusalem was beset by the army of Nebuchadrezzar and reduced to famine and dire distress. The puerile symbolism with which that dreadful time was recalled was not a spiritual or divine suggestion, nor is it at all likely that it was a reality to the writer. It was simply a means of impressing simpler minds, like the exaggerated language in which slaughter by famine, pestilence and sword as the weapons of a wrathful deity, is depicted. No more likely is it that the denunciation of the mountains and valleys of Israel and the threats of ruin and desolation for the idolatry of which they had been the scene, or the picture of terror and dismay when the anger of the Lord was vented upon the sinful land, was accompanied by the instructions and the symbolical actions de-

scribed. Like the visions, these are features of the literary art of this graphic composition.

Having placed these preliminary sketches of the siege, its causes, its incidents and its consequences on the fifth day of the fourth (?) month of the "fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity," the writer sets the fifth day of the sixth month of the sixth year for a vision of Jerusalem in her "great abominations" which had brought such a fate upon her. Again there is the appearance of that flaming deity of the river Chebar, which put forth a hand and lifted the prophet by a lock of his hair between earth and heaven and brought him in visions of God to Jerusalem. There he showed him what was going on, and exposed the wicked counsel of the princes of the people and its consequences. The author betrays his own point of view as he closes this scene with a promise of the Lord that he would be a sanctuary for his people for a little while "in the countries where they are come," and would gather them out of the lands in which they had been scattered, take away their detestable things and make them walk in his statutes.

Transported again "in the vision by the spirit of God into Chaldea to them of the captivity," the prophet symbolises the flight from the beleaguered city as a moving in haste from one's habitation, the captivity as a taking in of a net spread by the Lord, and the assurances of the

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false prophets as a worthless wall of protection daubed with "untempered mortar." There are some reflections upon the follies of the daughters of the people, some rebuke of the elders of Israel for cherishing idols in the heart, and a solemn assurance that a place could not be saved by the righteousness of the few, even though they were Noah, Daniel and Job; and then Jerusalem is likened to a vine that is cast into the fire.

There is an extreme case of that gross symbolism which represented infidelity to the God of Israel as "whoredom." Jerusalem was the bastard offspring of the Amorite and the Hittite, cast out in an open field to welter in its blood. The Lord had taken it up and cherished it into beauty, fed it upon dainties and decked it with ornaments, and after he had lavished upon it divine love and affection it had played the harlot. The picture of its lewdness and of the penalty of its shameless behaviour is graphic but not delicate. Jerusalem is made even worse than her wanton sister Samaria and the equal of the despised sister Sodom, and yet the Lord's covenant with her in her youth would be remembered and would be established as an everlasting covenant, when she had become duly ashamed and confounded; and those reclaimed sisters would be given to her as daughters.

Here is a picture of the King of Babylon and the King of Egypt as two great eagles between

which grew a spreading vine of low stature, and as it bent its roots and shot its branches towards the eagle of Egypt it was plucked up and carried away. This symbolised the revolt of Zedekiah and the attempt to get support from Egypt, which led to the destruction of Jerusalem. Of course it was the Lord that did it, and he would take a tender twig from the topmost ones of the great cedar, which the eagle had cropped off and carried away, and would plant it in the mountain of the height of Israel and make it a goodly cedar under which should dwell "all fowl of every wing."

After this follows a didactic chapter which is not significant so much for the contradiction of the popular proverb "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge," as for its subversion of the more solemn assertion of the old law that Israel's jealous God would visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. Following this is another symbolic picture of the last kings of Judah as young lions, one of which was caught and carried away to Egypt and another was put in a cage and brought to Babylon. The mother, who had been called a lioness, is then likened to a vine that had been planted by the waters and became fruitful with many branches, but was plucked up in fury, cast to the ground, her fruit dried up

by the east wind, her rods that were for sceptres broken and consumed with fire, and finally the vine was planted in a dry and thirsty land. "This is a lamentation and shall be for a lamentation."

Again there is a date, the tenth day of the fifth month of the seventh year, and the coming of the elders to inquire of the prophet is made the occasion of a discourse of judgment upon these elders. The character of this shows that it was not an actual discourse addressed as the words of the Lord to a real gathering of elders. It is a composition representing the writer as being made a judge of the elders of Israel in general, and recalling again with a "Thus saith the Lord," the derelictions of the past, even from the time when the Lord chose Israel and made himself known to them in the land of Egypt, throughout their history. They are represented as having been given to idolatry until the Lord would no longer be inquired of by them; but after being purged of their transgressions they would again be brought into "the bond of the covenant." All the house of Israel would yet serve the Lord in his holy mountain, and he would be sanctified in them in the sight of the nations.

There is some question whether this promise of restoration is not an interpolation of a later time than the original composition. At all events, it is immediately followed by another passage of fierce menace and another picture of the crush-

ing blow from the "sword of the King of Babylon." Again the prophet is bidden to denounce judgment upon the bloody city. The house of Israel has become dross which was to be purged from the pure silver by the fires of affliction and calamity. There was a conspiracy of prophets and profanation by priests; the princes were ravening wolves of prey and the people used oppression and exercised robbery; therefore the Lord had poured forth his indignation upon them and consumed them with the fire of his wrath.

The symbol of harlotry is used again in gross but vivid form and applied to Samaria and Jerusalem under the names of Oholah and Oholibah. Their lives are made the instruments of their humiliation and shame, and they should be made to know that "I am the Lord God." Again there is a reversion to the siege of Jerusalem, and the ninth year, the tenth month and the tenth day of the month, is set down as the self-same day in which the king of Babylon drew close to the city, which is symbolised as a caldron. In it was to boil the fury of the Lord to purge it of its filthiness. It may be that the prophet lost his wife by death, and it may be that he made use of this as a symbol of the bereavement of Jerusalem for which there was to be no mourning, but we are not called upon to believe that the Lord told him that he would take away

“the desire of his eyes” and forbade him to mourn in order to furnish the symbol.

The part of the Book of Ezekiel, up to this point, constituting just one-half of its chapters, as it is now divided, is in the nature of a preparation for the rest. There is no reason to suppose that it was written consecutively. Its parts are somewhat disconnected and there were probably separate visions, symbolical representations, descriptions and discourses, which were finally arranged, but not closely welded together, as a background for what was to relate to the future. Sins of Israel and the culminating offences of Jerusalem having been fully portrayed and denounced, and the retribution brought upon them having been depicted, all in the name of the Lord, as was the way with prophets, doom was pronounced upon the tempters and enemies who had brought woe upon God's people or who rejoiced in their downfall.

This begins in a brief way with their immediate neighbours, Ammon, Moab, Edom and Philistia, upon whom the Lord would execute vengeance with furious rebukes. It is elaborated in picturesque fashion against Tyre, the great trafficker among the nations. The Lord would bring Nebuchadrezzar, the instrument of his wrath, with horses and chariots, and the isles would shake with the sound of its fall. The prince of Tyre is denounced in words addressed directly

to him at the bidding of the Lord, and there is lamentation over the fate of that proud potentate, brought upon him in his "beauty" and his "brightness" for the multitude of his iniquities and the unrighteousness of his traffic. There is a brief pendant of doom for Zidon, upon which pestilence and blood in her streets were to be sent, that she might no more be a "pricking brier unto the house of Israel."

Then the voice of wrath is turned "in the tenth year, in the tenth month, in the twelfth day of the month," upon the chief offender against the Lord and his people, Egypt, the "great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers." It is to be given as a spoil and a reward to Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon. It would be made an "utter waste and desolation" and would be uninhabited for forty years, after which its people would be gathered "from the peoples whither they were scattered," and the Lord would "bring again the captivity of Egypt." Many resounding reverberations are played upon this theme, ending with dithyrambic wails for the multitude sent down to the underworld to lie with other multitudes of the uncircumcised. Nobody can deny the epic grandeur of these scenes of woe for those who had scorned Israel and defied her God, but nobody can reasonably claim for them a historical character or any approach to a fulfilment of the dire predictions. As they were never revised or

adapted to events by a later hand, they accord with nothing in subsequent history. They were utterances of the prophet attributed to the God whom he imagined and in whom he devoutly believed. Perhaps he thought he was inspired by that God to give utterance to his purposes, for that has been the belief of many a prophet and preacher before and since.

Having thus unburdened himself against the foreign enemies of Israel, the prophet turns his face to the future of his own people and the Lord's purpose of restoring them after due repentance and amendment. The Lord makes him his watchman with a trumpet to warn his people, and tells him of his responsibility as such and the individual responsibility for their deeds of the righteous and the wicked. He is to denounce the false shepherds of Israel who were the cause of their going astray and being scattered, who instead of feeding and caring for them had fed upon their substance. But the Lord would gather his flock and would judge between them. He would destroy the fat and strong and would set one shepherd over the rescued ones, "even my servant David." He would make with them a covenant of peace and cause evil hearts to cease out of the land. Here perhaps, is the first foreshadowing of that Messianic hope which so long lured the sons of Israel through afflictions yet to come, and which looked to a restoration of the

glories of David under a prince of peace and righteousness whose dominion was to be everlasting.

Next a strong contrast is presented by uttering anew the threats of wrath and vengeance upon Mount Seir and the land of Edom and following them with prophecies of beneficence to the mountains of Israel, when a purified people should be restored. This was to be done not for the sake of the people but for the vindication of the Lord himself and the holy name which they had profaned among the nations. But to that end he would cleanse them and put a new heart in them, and the desolate land should become as the garden of Eden, that the nations might know that the Lord had done it. The waste cities should be filled with flocks of men and "they shall know that I am the Lord."

The revival and restoration of the people is vividly symbolised in the vision of the valley of dry bones, where naked skeletons are brought together, clothed with flesh and breathed into life by the breath of the Lord. The symbolism is made plain by the saying of Israel: "Our bones are dried up and our hope is lost," and the reply: "Behold, I will open your graves, and cause you to come out of your graves, O my people, and I will bring you into the land of Israel." By the less dignified symbolism of the two sticks it is promised that Joseph as well as

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Judah shall be gathered from among the nations and they shall become one people in the land of Jacob, where "David my servant shall be their prince forever."

One more symbolical vision completes the preparation for the restored kingdom and the reign of the law of the Lord. The enemies of Israel are figured as Gog of the land of Magog. There is neither history nor geography in this, and efforts to give it reality are as puerile as an attempt to make reality of the scenes and characters in the poetic visions of Milton, or the stories of Gulliver. It is the enemies of Israel that menace the kingdom that is to come, who are to come up against the mountains of Israel and encounter the wrath of the Lord, whose fury would come into his nostrils. He would plead against Gog "with pestilence and with blood," and rain upon him and his hordes an "overflowing shower, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone." Gog should have a place for burial in Israel, "the valley of them that pass through on the East of the sea." The house of Israel would be seven months in burying him and his multitude, "that they may cleanse the land." There would be a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel and birds of prey would be sated with flesh and blood. The Lord would set his glory among the nations and they should see the judgment that he executed. Then would the house of Israel know that the

Lord was their God, that he caused them to go into captivity and gathered them again into their own land. He would leave none of them any more among the nations; neither would he hide his face from them, "for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord." How far was this fervent hope of the exiled prophet, which he transformed into a promise of the Lord the God of Israel, ever realised?

Now he was prepared for a vision of the Jerusalem that was to be, and he says that "in the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after that City was smitten," the hand of the Lord was upon him and that it transported him thither and set him on a very high mountain. Then he sets forth an idealistic plan of the restored temple and its courts, and the restored city and its sanctified environment, with formal measurements and arrangements. He is brought to the gate which looketh toward the East and beholds the glory of the Lord coming from that direction, like the vision that he saw by the river Chebar. It enters into the house by the Eastern gate and the prophet is brought into the court and sees the glory of the Lord that fills the place. He hears a voice speaking to him out of the house, as a man stands by him, saying: "This is the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet

where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever." And he is bidden to write the ordinances and the laws of the Lord's house. These are set forth in what became the broad outlines for the Levitical system of a later time. Then in symbolic fashion is pictured the deepening stream that was to flow from that house to irrigate and fructify the realm of restored Israel. In a manner as formal as the measurements of the temple and of the city of Zion, the whole land is divided and allotted among the tribes, and their names are fixed to the twelve gates of the city, the name of which from that day shall be "the Lord is there."

Such was the vision of the prophet in exile of the future of the city toward which his heart yearned and of the people over whose sins he had sorrowed, but whom the Lord had chastened and purified and would redeem and bring to greater glory than they had ever dreamed of. His promises would yet be fulfilled in abundant measure under the everlasting rule of the house of David, as the direct servant of the Lord and prince of righteousness and peace. How long the prophet lived after bequeathing the heritage of his visions and prophecies to sustain the hearts of the captives, there is no record. He is not spoken of outside of the book that bears his name. Those long cherished hopes were doomed to more bitter disappointments as time went on and Israel

passed from the yoke of Babylon to that of Persia and then to that of Greece, and after a tumultuous insurrection and a short-lived dynasty outside of the line of David, to the firm grasp of the Roman power.

Apparently Ezekiel had no intimation of the release that was to come from the conquests of Cyrus of Persia, who followed the subjugation of Media and Lydia with an attack upon Babylonia which resulted in the fall of the proud capital of that realm in 539 B. C. But as soon as that release was assured an exultant voice arose from among the exiles, or, to put it more literally, a rhapsody was composed and doubtless circulated among them, to find its place afterwards in the epic literature and to be wrongly attached to the collection of oracles bearing the name of Isaiah. The last twenty-seven chapters of the book to which that name is attached constitute a collection, partly exilic and partly post-exilic, composed of three distinct sections. The first of these, consisting of nine chapters (xl to xlviii of the present Book of Isaiah), emanated from a poetical genius of great power, whose name was left in oblivion, though his work was destined to live as long as mankind had memory for past achievements and love of ancient literature.

The author of this sublime passage seems to have had his hopes aroused, through his confidence in the watchfulness of Israel's God over his cap-

tive people and in the certainty of their rescue, even before Cyrus had possession of Babylon and the edict of release for the Jews was issued. He begins with a message of comfort to Jerusalem because the Lord is coming to her again from the East, with double recompense for all that she has suffered for her sins. A voice in the wilderness cries out for preparing the way for him, and the tidings of his coming are passed on from the mountain tops to Zion, with promise that he will feed his flock again like a shepherd. There is no reference to any prophet or to the coming of the word of the Lord to any one, but the writer in imagination utters the voice, sometimes in his own person as the oracle of God, sometimes in the first person as the voice of God himself, sometimes in the character of Zion's waiting people or of the city of their longing. The conception of the deity has changed to conform with the changed conditions of the time, the subdued temper of the people and the hopeful attitude of the writer.

He does not forget the sins of his people, but they have been chastened and purified, their warfare is accomplished, their iniquity is pardoned; his love for them has returned, and he will fulfil his ancient promise with added glory. It is he that has made Cyrus his anointed servant to release the captives and send them home in triumph, not their own but that of the Lord, that the nations may acknowledge his greatness.

His might is set forth with a splendour of diction equalled only by that of the Book of Job, and his greatness is described in his own words in a grandiose manner that would only befit a deity in comparison with whom all other gods were senseless idols. It was the Almighty God of Israel who was using Cyrus as his unconscious instrument, and he would redeem his own blind and helpless servant, the "worm Jacob," and make him a power to beat down the nations. In himself this servant was feeble. He would not lift up his voice, he would not break a bruised reed or quench smoking flax, and yet he would become a covenant of the people and a light to the Gentiles for which the Lord would have the praise and glory. He had given Jacob for a spoil and Israel to the robbers in the fury of his anger, but he had redeemed him and given nations for his ransom. For his sake he had brought down the nobles of Babylon, and for his chosen people he would make rivers in the desert.

There is reiteration and variation in the glorious theme of Israel's rescue and coming restoration to Zion, through which the voice of Yahweh is made to roll in resounding accents of self-glorification. In reality it is the reawakened voice of Israel's pride of race, its sense of superiority and its faith in the God which it had conceived from the depths of a genius that had no rival in the early time. After promise of reward to Cyrus,

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a picture of humiliation for the "virgin daughter," Babylon, a further magnifying of the great and only God, the Holy One of Israel, a reminder of what his people might have been if they had hearkened to his commandments, this prophetic voice which rose from among the exiles with such splendid, incoherent rapture, bids them flee from the Chaldeans and declare to the end of the earth "the Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob."

But they did not flee at once and the way was not made easy for them. Very earthly obstacles and difficulties beset the efforts of those who strove to organise for the return. The next seven chapters of this collection were undoubtedly from a different source and of later production, but scholars seem to be agreed that the main substance of them proceeded from the community at Babylon before the departure began under Zerubabel, the survivor of the line of David, and the priest Jeshua, after the decree of Cyrus, in 538 B. C. This passage as a whole is pitched in a lower tone than what precedes, but it breaks out here and there with a similar fervid eloquence. It has the appearance of a composite structure made up of varied material, much of it poetical in form. Its leading characteristic is a rather obscure personification of redeemed Israel as the "servant of Yahweh," who has been through trial and affliction for transgressions of those who owe their redemption to him. This kind of personi-

fication of the people is characteristic of the ancient Hebrew writing throughout. All mankind was personified in Adam. The whole Semitic people of Western Asia were personified in Abraham. The people of Israel were personified in Jacob, and all their divisions, tribal or territorial, were personified in his sons. There seems to be no reason to suppose that the writer had any individual in mind in describing the suffering servant of Yahweh. If, as some have thought, this was so, it is impossible to identify the person, and it is certain that there was no foreshadowing of any being that was to come in future generations.

The passage begins with this servant, in whom the Lord is to be glorified, speaking in the first person and calling the peoples to witness. He is then made to utter the promise of the Lord to afflicted and mourning Zion, telling her that he had never been divorced from her mother nor had he sold her as a slave to his creditors. The servant had meekly borne his chastisement and the Lord would justify him and destroy his adversary. The voice of Yahweh (the Lord) himself is invoked to declare his promise and assert his power to fulfil. The earth might wax old as a garment but his salvation would be forever. Other voices are made to invoke his might and to call upon Jerusalem to awake to a new destiny, for the cup of the Lord's fury is taken

away. She may shake off the dust of her humiliation, loosen the bands of captivity from her neck, and put on her beautiful garments. Messengers with feet of beauty on the mountains bring tidings of joy; watchmen hail them with songs of comfort and triumph, and bid the captives to go forth, with the God of Israel in the van and in the rear to guard them.

That servant that has suffered so much and has been so afflicted shall prosper and be exalted, though his visage is so marred by what he has been through. The poetical description of him as one who grew up as a tender plant from dry ground, as having been deprived of all comeliness, despised and rejected, a man of sorrows, who has borne the griefs of the whole people and been wounded for their transgressions, etc., is believed to be a later interpolation, but it surely refers to that righteous part of Israel which had lived through all the trials, and caused the redemption of the remnant, and to whom the Lord would yet divide a portion with the great and a spoil with the strong. That song, over which so much puzzled learning has been expended, interrupts the course of the songs of joy and comfort and of promise of triumph yet to come for Zion, when it should become the refuge of the righteous from all nations and the Lord should be its ruler. In all this was expressed the ardent hope of the captive people at the prospect of release

and that invincible reliance of their leading minds upon the God who embodied all that was greatest and highest in their religious conceptions, and who was peculiarly theirs and would ultimately bring all the world into subjection to them.

There is a drop from this height in the last eleven chapters, which in the redaction and arrangement of this material became attached with the rest to the book to which the name of the prophet Isaiah had been given, and it is a drop into another century and a different time. The captives that were led back by Zerubbabel and Jeshua had been through their struggle for rebuilding the temple and rehabilitating Jerusalem, with much discouragement after the high hopes of the return. Many years later the priest Ezra, who had remained with other priests and scribes working up a new system of laws for restored Judaism, had brought over an important contingent, and after much delay had promulgated the code and had the people swear fealty to it. Nehemiah had come from the Persian capital with the authority of the sovereign whose cup-bearer he had been, to complete the walls that were still half in ruins, and had afterwards been made a delegate of the Persian power, and allowed to reform the administration of the Jewish community in accordance with its own religious polity. There had been much disappointment and the tendency to relapse was sometimes de-

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pressing. It is this period under the Persian sovereignty that is reflected in these chapters, which are made up of material that is by no means homogeneous and was either from different sources or substantially modified in editing.

There are appeals for observance of the commands of the law and rebukes for neglect. There are references to lapses into idolatry and iniquity, which will be punished, and pleas for righteous conduct, which will have its reward. It is no longer the nation as distinguished from other nations that is the object of divine care, but the righteous as distinguished from the wicked. But the righteous would prevail. The Lord's covenant would be with them and his word would not depart from them. A song is introduced which tells again of the glory and greatness yet to come to Zion, when the nations should be attracted by its light and come with their gifts to minister unto it. It should be called the City of the Lord and draw sustenance from all nations, and its officers should be peace and its "exactors" righteousness. With the familiar hyperbole of this kind of prophecy, verging upon the glowing apocalyptic style that developed later, it is said that it should not need the light of the sun and moon, but the Lord would be its everlasting light. All its people should be righteous and should inherit the land forever. There is a reiteration of this promise in a different style in

which Zion is figured as the bride of its redeemer, who would rejoice over it as a bridegroom. It should be called "sought out" and not "the city forsaken."

There is interjected once more a picture of the Lord in his garb of war and with his sword of fury, but it is as an avenger of his people against their enemies. It is followed, as if for contrast, by a humble prayer of his people for his loving kindness and praise for his great goodness to the people of Israel, in which past benefits are recalled and past sins and punishment are mourned over. After this is a further judgment upon those that forsake the Lord and blessing upon those who are his servants in righteousness and truth, and there is ever the burden of salvation for Jerusalem, the time when it should be purified from evil and freed from all enemies. All nations should come to see its glory and send home its sons, "and it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another and from one Sabbath to another shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." It was thus that "prophets" whose names are unknown uttered promises and sustained struggling hopes in the name of the Lord, while foreign powers one after another held his people in subjection, from which they were to escape only to be scattered over the earth, instead of being gathered from among the nations to make his holy city the centre of a world's desire.

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These last chapters attached to the Book of Isaiah have carried us far beyond the days of the exile and we have left on the way other prophetic writings, which should not be passed without notice. "The burden of Babylon" attributed to the real Isaiah in chapter thirteen, and fourteen to the twenty-third verse, of the same book, belong to the period of chapters forty to forty-eight, and may be from the same hand. The first ten verses of chapter twenty-one, whatever their origin, are also of that period, and the same is true of the threats and promises of chapters thirty-four and thirty-five, telling that the ransomed of the Lord are to return to Zion "with songs and everlasting joy." But closely associated with events following the return of the first released exiles after the edict of Cyrus were the discourses of Haggai and the visions of Zechariah, the latter contained in the first eight chapters of the book that bears that name.

It is said in the Book of Ezra, which was compiled by the Chronicler at least two centuries after these events from material more than a century old when the compilation was made, that these two prophesied unto the Jews in the name of the God of Israel, and that "then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Sheatiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak and began to build the house of God which is in Jerusalem." This was in the second year of Darius of Persia, 502 B. C., and eighteen

years after the return and the beginning of the effort to rebuild the temple. Difficulties had been encountered and the work lagged sadly. There had apparently been a drought, a lack of harvests and "hard times" for the forlorn community of exiles who had come back with such high hopes. Haggai, who was evidently an old man, took occasion to represent this as a penalty because of the house of the Lord that "lieth waste," and to rouse up the prince and the priest to renewed efforts. It is said to have had the desired effect and the old prophet encouraged those who were depressed by the humble beginning with the assurance that the Lord was with them and would bring abundance of aid, so that "the glory of this house shall be greater than the former," and peace should be given in it. The priests are rebuked for scanting the sacrifices, which was also a cause of the poor harvests. The style of the oracle is commonplace and rather feeble, but at the end it rises into a glowing promise of power when the Lord would make "Zerubbabel as a signet, for I have chosen thee saith the Lord."

The visions of Zechariah are contemporaneous with the exhortations of Haggai and have a like purpose. Though they are visions of the night, they lack both the glow of poetry and the eloquence of prophecy. There is a prelude reminding the people that in the past the Lord had treated their fathers according to their evil ways,

and a warning to them that his threats and promises were always fulfilled. In the visions an "angel" speaks for the Lord. The conception of the angel as it appears here was derived from Persian mythology, as was that of Satan as the adversary, a character which had never before appeared in Hebrew literature. Of course the visions are as imaginary as those of Dante or Milton, or Bunyan, and they are much less poetical or impressive. In the first vision the angel calls upon the Lord to know how long he will "not have mercy on Jerusalem," and elicits the response that he is "jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy," and is sore displeased with the nations, which his mounted emissaries found so much "at ease." He was, therefore, returned to Jerusalem with mercies and determined that his house should be built.

The next vision was of the "four horns," or nations that had scattered Israel, and of the smiths who would fray them and cut them down. Then, one with a measuring line prefigures the coming greatness of Jerusalem, as the Lord had "walked up out of his holy habitation" and had come to choose it as his own. Next is a vision of Jeshua, the high priest, who was to be cleansed of the filthy garments of iniquity and clothed with rich apparel, a "fair diadem" on his head, while the Lord would bring forth his servant "the Branch." It is not made clear that Zerubbabel

is to be this "Branch," or shoot, presumably of the house of David, but the next vision, of the golden candlestick and the two olive trees, seems to imply that he is to rule, "not by might, nor by power but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts"; and it is promised that he shall finish "this house." These two "sons of oil" were to stand by the Lord of the whole earth. Then a curse is seen to go forth over the land as a "flying roll" for those who steal and swear falsely, and wickedness is sent in an "ephah" to build her house in the land of Shinar. Finally, the four winds of heaven, as chariots with vari-coloured horses, are sent to the four quarters of the earth, apparently to quiet the spirit of hostility; and the high priest and "the Branch" are crowned with the promise that "the man whose name is the Branch" shall build the temple of the Lord and bear the glory, and shall rule upon his throne, while the other shall be a priest upon his throne, and "the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

This may have been encouraging to the temple-builders, but Zerubbabel disappeared from history without sitting upon a throne and the priests became dominant at Jerusalem. Two years later Zechariah is heard from again, replying to priests who wish to know whether they shall keep up the fasts that commemorated the destruction of Jerusalem and the murder of Gedaliah, who had been appointed the first governor by the King of Baby-

lon. Speaking in the name of the Lord he repeats the familiar promise of restoration and greatness, and advises, or rather commands, that the fasts be converted into cheerful feasts. The last six chapters of the book entitled "Zechariah" are of much later origin and became attached to the rest when all these writings were in manuscript, most of them without titles and in disorder.

Probably the next prediction in order of time known as a "prophecy," is that labelled "Malachi," which is not a proper name, but means "my messenger" and was doubtless attached to it as a title by some editor, on account of the promise at the beginning of chapter three: "I will send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me." Its date is not easy to fix, but it is generally assumed by the learned to be before the time of Ezra, who brought his law book from Babylon in 458 B. C. It was a time when priests held sway and the secular power, which was subject to Persia, was hardly recognised. Part of it is in the form of a sort of colloquy put in the mouth of Yahweh, and sometimes the utterances appear as those of the Lord and sometimes as those of the writer or of the Lord's people. It begins with a brief prelude contrasting the Lord's love of Jacob with his enmity for the brother nation of Esau. Then there is a rough rebuke of the priests for the inferior quality of

their sacrifices and a vulgar threat of punishment.

The ordinances of the priesthood are represented as a covenant between the Lord and Levi, the common personification of the priestly order. The priests of the writer's time are condemned for corrupting "the covenant of Levi." Another purpose of this production was to condemn the repudiation by some of the Jews of the wives of their youth and the taking of wives outside of their community, figured as the marriage of Judah with "the daughter of a strange god." The priests are also censured for wearying the Lord with words, and are told that he will send his messenger and will himself suddenly come to his temple to purge and purify the sons of Levi and to be a witness against those who violate his commandments. Those who fail in presenting their tithes are accused of robbing God and are visited with a curse, while the promise is made that, when the whole tithe is brought, a blessing will be poured out so abundant that there will not be room to receive it.

This well illustrates the use to which the name of Yahweh, or "the Lord," came to be put by the censors of the time, but it differed only in quality and degree from its customary use by prophets and law-makers, who always attributed their teaching, their warnings and commands, their threats and promises, to the deity as they

conceived him, doubtless believing that they spoke by his inspiration. The most significant part of this little anonymous production, and that which probably caused its preservation, is its close. In those days of humility and subjection to foreign authority there was ever the dream of sudden rescue by the Lord, who would summon the nations to judgment, destroy the enemies of his people and purge the wicked from among them, and would establish a kingdom of righteousness and peace, under his own sway, with a prince of his choosing from the stock of David. Here it is said that Elijah the prophet, who according to the legend had been carried alive to heaven in a whirlwind, would be sent before the great and terrible day to turn the hearts of the people and avert the curse with which the Lord would otherwise smite the earth.

There is a highly poetical oracle of a still later time, the burden of which is this same "great and terrible day of the Lord." It is introduced as "the word of the Lord that came to Joel the son of Pethuel," though it is mostly descriptive, and the direct word of the Lord appears only as he is referred to here and there as speaking in his own person. Perhaps the destruction of the harvest of a year by drought and a pest of locusts is an allusion to actual experience, and it is surely not to be interpreted as a figurative portrayal of invasion and devastation by a real army. The de-

scription of the destroying army of insects is one of the most vivid in all literature. This visitation is represented as an affliction sent by the Lord and as a precursor of the great and terrible day, and the people are called upon to turn to him with fasting and with weeping and mourning, for he was gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness and he would remove from them this pest and "drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face to the Eastern sea and his hinderpart to the Western sea." The land should rejoice and the Lord would do great things for it. There should be an era of abundance and the Lord would pour out his spirit upon all flesh.

The great and terrible day would be heralded by wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke, the turning of the sun into darkness and the moon into blood, but for those who called upon the Lord there would be deliverance in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem. There is a graphic picture of the gathering of the nations for judgment in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Yahweh judges), and of the coming destruction of the enemies of God and his people. "But Judah shall dwell forever and Jerusalem from generation to generation. For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed; for the Lord dwelleth in Zion."

This is an early and fine example of that

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apocalyptic writing which became so common in later centuries. It is a product of the imagination embodying the aspirations and hopes of the ardent prophets of Israel, but those hopes were doomed to continued disappointment. It neither prefigured historic events that were destined to come to pass, nor embodied theological conceptions of enduring validity; but it is interesting as reflecting the spirit that dwelt in Israel in a time of depression and gloom. Of the same period, but probably somewhat later, and in a similar spirit of hopeful prophecy, is the passage interpolated in the midst of the Book of Isaiah as chapters twenty-four to twenty-seven according to the modern division. Of this period also, though showing evidence of being grafted upon a more ancient oracle, is the "vision of Obadiah." It is directed especially against the kindred nation of Edom, for which Israel cherished such bitter resentment for being less than kind in the early struggles; but the punishment of Edom is dwelt upon in view of the day of the Lord that was "near upon all the nations," when all should be judged and the kingdom should be the Lord's.

After much study and research by the learned, no doubt seems to remain that the latest of all the "prophecies," save for fragments interpolated or affixed here and there upon the older "books," is to be found in the six chapters that now constitute the latter part of the Book of Zechariah.

Notwithstanding all the labour bestowed upon its exposition it is full of obscurities, because so little is known of the period of its production or the conditions or events which the writer or writers had in mind that its many vague allusions cannot be understood. It is in two sections, probably of different origin, each beginning with "The burden of the word of the Lord," and there are evidences that it could not have appeared before the period of Greek domination in Syria and Palestine. It shows the old spirit of hatred for other nations and hope for their destruction, and of expectation of final salvation and security for the sanctified realm of Zion. Its chief interest for us lies in the perverted use made of some of its obscurest passages in the later transformations of the conceptions of a coming Messiah, or anointed one.

The rejoicing of the daughter of Zion at the coming of a just and lowly king may have had some reference to a real person, or it may have personified that undying hope of a righteous and peaceful reign to come; but it was not a prophecy of something wholly different from what its language indicates. Who the shepherds were so frequently referred to, the three shepherds cut off in one month, the one whose hire was thirty pieces of silver, the "worthless shepherd that leaveth the flock," or the one that was to be smitten that the sheep might be scattered, no man has the

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means of finding out; but they were surely persons of the writer's own time, which seems to have been one of change and uncertainty at Jerusalem. The one certain thing is that the "burden" was still the destruction of the enemies of Israel and the coming time, when no family of the earth should prosper or even live that "goeth not up unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts." That time lives only in the imagination of the wandering Jew who believes that the covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is still to be kept.

X

THE JEWISH LAW

THE Jewish law, which was finally interwoven with the legendary narratives of the passage through the deserts from Egypt and the approach to the "promised land," beginning with the mythical theophany on Mount Sinai, was largely wrought from old and new material by the priests and scribes in the exile at Babylon, but it was not completed until after the re-establishment and elaboration of the ceremonial worship at Jerusalem. It became part of a new ecclesiastical system, and the old narratives were modified and adapted to it, but not so skilfully as to conceal the incongruities. The oldest material is that known as the first "Book of the Covenant," running from Exodus xx, 24 to xxiii, 19. It is generally agreed by scholars that this is older than either of the ancient documents known as the Yahwist and the Elohist accounts, and that it was introduced by one or the other of these, though it may have been first adopted into the narrative when they were blended together. The so-called "decatalogue," which precedes it, is a

later interpolation, and the narrative of chapter xix continues at verse nineteen of chapter xx.

This "Book of the Covenant" consists mainly of a primitive codification of regulations, relating slightly to matters of worship but chiefly to certain personal and property rights and duties. It was probably derived in part from Chaldean prescriptions of a similar kind; but with the barbarous rule of retaliation as a penalty for wrongs it embodies some merciful requirements regarding the treatment of the poor, the fatherless and the widow, and the stranger. It requires the offering of the first fruits of the field and vineyard and of cattle and sheep, and even the first-born son to "the Lord," and prescribes certain feasts and sacrifices and the weekly day of rest for man and beast, which last was certainly of Babylonian origin. This "covenant" is now only of antiquarian interest, like most of the law.

After this interruption the mixed narrative is resumed in which it is said that Moses told the people "all the words of the Lord" and that he "wrote all the words of the Lord," and finally that he "took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people." It is also said that the Lord called him up into the mountain and promised to give him "tables of stone and a law and commandments which I have written that thou mayest teach them." The mythical character of such statements, as well as of those relating

to the sojourn of Moses on the cloud-covered mountain, first waiting six days for the Lord to speak and then remaining forty days and forty nights, has been already considered. The narrative is again interrupted by a long passage of six chapters of much later origin, followed by the account of the making and worshipping of the golden calf, which aroused the fierce wrath of the Lord and caused Moses in his anger to break the two tables of stone which he was bringing down from the mountain, written on both sides with "the writing of God." It is well to remember that this narrative was written long after Jeroboam had set up his golden calf as a symbol of Yahweh at Bethel, and it was no doubt intended as a condemnation of such devices though they were then no new thing in Israel. Such symbols had been in use without condemnation in the days of the "Judges" and the first kings.

Moses succeeded by his intercession in so far averting the fierce anger of the outraged deity that he refrained from destroying the people who gave him so much trouble, and promised to write upon two new tables of stone the words that were upon the first. We need not pursue the narrative, the character of which is so plain, but what were the words graven upon the tables of stone? The Lord is represented as saying to Moses "I make a covenant," and as warning against any "covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which

thou goest, lest it be a snare in the midst of thee," and then delivering a number of injunctions, beginning "Thou shalt worship no other God" and ending "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk." "And the Lord said unto Moses write these words"; and, after being there with the Lord forty days and forty nights, it is said that he wrote upon the tables of stone "the words of the covenant, the ten commandments."

Notwithstanding all the controversy that has been waged over this question by those anxious to preserve consistency where no consistency is, and to maintain as a divine revelation what was surely a most human device, it is perfectly plain that what is there represented as being written on the two tables of stone are the words of the covenant immediately preceding. The origin of what we are accustomed to call the "ten commandments" and have been taught to believe were written on the tables of stone on Mount Sinai by the finger of God, is hidden in impenetrable obscurity, and every attempt to elucidate it on the theory of divine revelation and consistency in the accounts, only makes confusion worse confounded. Their formulation was certainly much later than the original material of these narratives, which first appeared some centuries after the time assigned to the exodus from Egypt under the guidance of a deliverer to whom the name Moses was given.

There is nothing in the older writings relating to the time of the judges or the kings, or in the utterances of prophets before the exile, implying a knowledge of this consecrated decalogue, whether written on tables of stone by Moses or by the "finger of God." The oldest form in which it was preserved is undoubtedly that in the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy, but the oldest part of that book first appeared in the reign of Josiah, about 622 B. C., and it was considerably enlarged at a later time and put into its final form after the exile. These ten commandments may have been included in the "Book of the Law" said to have been found in the temple by the priest Hilkiah, which formed the nucleus of what became the Book of Deuteronomy; but it was probably incorporated later. In the connecting narrative there Moses is represented as saying "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the Mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud and of the thick darkness, with a great voice and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone and delivered them unto me."

This was no doubt derived by the writer from the old accounts, which must have been in the temple at the time, but it corresponds with them very imperfectly, and is not to be regarded as in any sense historical fact. Considered as pure imagination, it is quite consistent with the manner of priests and prophets, not only in Israel but among

all ancient people. It is difficult for us to realise how little they thought of fact in such matters, and how readily they believed what they imagined to be the truth.

This version of the decalogue differs in significant points from that interpolated in the narrative of the theophany on Mount Sinai in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. Though much learned question has been made of it, that form was surely a post-exilic modification of the other, included in the constituent of the Pentateuch known as the "Priests' Code" or the "priests' writing." To that without doubt belonged the opening chapter of Genesis, with its lofty conception of the deity and its scheme of creation in six days, after which God rested on the seventh day from all his work. The Sabbath as a day of rest, whenever it was first observed in Israel, of which there is no certain evidence in pre-exilic writing, was derived from Babylonia. The author of the Deuteronomic decalogue makes its observance a memorial of the deliverance from Egyptian bondage. That of the version in Exodus gives it the sanction of the Lord's example, in keeping with the story of the creation, and this may be safely taken as conclusive evidence of the late origin of this version of the decalogue. That production in itself, apart from the commands against the worship of any other god, the use of idols or images, and the use of Yahweh's name

in false oaths, and for the observance of every seventh day for rest from labour, is simply an admirable condensation of injunctions that might be culled from almost any ancient literature. It needed no higher inspiration than has been common in "men of light and leading" in all historic time.

Next to the ancient form of the "Book of the Covenant" and the briefer statement of commands as a "covenant" in the narrative of Chapter thirty-four of the Book of Exodus, the oldest part of the written law is that to be found in Deuteronomy. In the account of the reign of Josiah in the Second Book of Kings, it is said that this was found in "the house of the Lord" by the priest Hilkiyah and taken to the king by Shaphan the scribe in the eighteenth year of the reign of that Monarch, when he was twenty-six years of age. The king was so alarmed at its contents that he rent his clothes and immediately began the reforms in worship and in observances which are then described.

The precise origin of this "book of the law" and how much it constitutes of the present book of Deuteronomy has been the subject of much learned discussion. It is now generally agreed that the introductory discourses of Moses, "addressed to all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness," which would be "this side" toward the exiles at Babylon, as far at least as the

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end of Chapter four, are considerably later and not entirely homogeneous. Most of the closing chapters after XXVI, 15, are of extraneous material of a mixed character, but the blessing and cursing of Chapter XXVIII are generally credited to the original document. Opinions differ as to whether this document includes all from Chapter five to XXVI, 15, or begins with Chapter twelve, but for our purpose this does not greatly matter. In any case the whole was subject to revision by the later scribes, though there is little evidence of material change.

As to the origin of the book of the law as it was "found" in the temple, there are some pertinent observations suggested by independent criticism, which are not altogether consistent with the conclusions of those learned persons who are anxious to preserve the sacred character of what they admit to be the work of men some 2,500 years ago in an Asiatic country. For considerably more than a hundred years before the time of Josiah the prophets, first in the kingdom of Israel and then in Judah, had been contending strenuously against the tendency of the people to be enticed into the worship of "other gods" than Yahweh, and into the practices of the surrounding people and of the survivors of the Canaanite tribes. They had striven to magnify the God of Israel in the eyes of his people, to impress upon them the principles of righteous conduct and purity of

life, as his commands and as necessary to his favour and protection. They recalled promises attributed to him by the earliest writers, reminded the people of what he had done for them, and uttered direful threats of what he would do if they did not obey him and worship him only.

In spite of all, they and most of their rulers persisted in going astray in the most vexatious manner, and this was the cause of all the calamity that befel them. It made their God jealous and wrathful, and he would utterly destroy them if they did not mend their ways, though he would surely save a faithful remnant with which to fulfil his promise to Abraham in the covenant made with him in the olden time. Already his patience had been exhausted by Ephraim, or the kingdom of Israel, and he had brought the Assyrians upon it and destroyed it. Judah had narrowly escaped the same power in the time of Hezekiah, but in spite of the warning there had been a terrible relapse under his son Manasseh, which continued under the short reign of Amon. Josiah came to the throne when he was eight years old, and according to the statements made in connection with the "reforms" instituted after the discovery of "the book of the law," the like of which was not known before, the evil practices had continued up to that time. Jeremiah had appeared on the scene as a prophet five years before that, and his earlier utterances as preserved are of the most

doleful and menacing kind, on account of the prevailing idolatry and iniquity. It is significant that nothing after these utterances can be identified as his during the reign of Josiah, and it may be equally significant that the prophet is not mentioned in the Book of Kings in connection with that ruler or his successors, all account of his activity being transferred to the Book of Jeremiah, where no mention is made of the "book of the law."

The obvious purpose of this book was to battle against the very condition of things that then existed in Judah, and to induce the destruction of all the old fanes and altars of the "high places," with their heathenish symbols, and to concentrate all worship and sacrifices at Jerusalem, the place which the Lord had chosen "to cause his name to dwell there." Was this book, so effectively designed and so opportunely brought to light, merely "found" by accident in the temple, or was it deliberately produced by priest or prophet, under the keen guidance of Jeremiah, for the very purpose of accomplishing the results that followed? The inference implied in this question, which is not merely plausible but almost irresistible, has been generally discarded by learned scholars, mostly doctors of divinity, on account of their aversion to what has been characterised as a "pious fraud."

But why "fraud," any more than the fulminations on Mount Sinai, which must be acknowl-

edged to be mythical? Why fraud any more than proclaiming the whole Levitical system as the voice of God "out of the tabernacle of the congregation" to Moses, to be repeated by him to the people in the wilderness of Sinai, when that is demonstrably the work of priests and scribes after the exile? Why fraud any more than attributing to Moses this very book of the law, when it is admitted that as a historic fact he was not and could not have been the author of it? It would be altogether in keeping with the manner of the time, constantly pursued by priests and prophets for impressing the people, to bring forth this volume in a mysterious way, as "found in the house of the Lord" and presumably left there by the Lord himself to be found. There was no consciousness of fraud in such devices, and it is absurd to apply modern ethical principles to such a performance in those days and in that part of the ancient world. We have only to get rid of certain obsessions regarding the difference between Hebrews and other human beings to accept with equanimity the most probable theory regarding the origin of this particular production.

Its interest is mainly antiquarian, or historical and ethnological, and we need not linger long over the contents. The commands, delivered in the most impressive way as coming down from the time of Moses and uttered by him as the direct mouthpiece of Israel's God, just as he was about

to bring his people into the promised land, and as their great leader was to take leave of them without entering it on account of their sins, are directed first of all to the extermination of the tribes in that land and the utter destruction of their places and devices of heathen worship. This is to be done in the most complete and pitiless way, that no enticement be left to alienate the Lord's people from him after all that he has done and will do for them. These exhortations are mingled with reminders of the past, with promises for the future in case of obedience, and with threats in case of disobedience, and are reiterated in various forms. Whatever the difference of origin in the two sections of the book, the real code of "statutes and judgments" begins with chapter twelve, and there the first place is given to the destruction of the places and forms and symbols of worship in the land which the Lord was about to give to his people. There also the design of concentrating his own worship at one place first appears.

Directions are given about the manner of worship and the preservation of fidelity to its obligations. Death by stoning is to be the penalty of infidelity, and all heretics to the faith are to be ruthlessly destroyed. There are prescriptions regarding food, regarding offerings and sacrifices, the keeping of the passover and other feasts, the punishment of offences, the duties and allowances

of "the priests the Levites," etc. Much of it is crude and barbarous, in keeping with the spirit of the time, with overmuch of death penalty and cruelty; but there is humanity for those of the tribe and the family, kindness to the poor, the bereaved, and the stranger, and mercy for the penitent and submissive. Here and there are flashes of the ethical spirit of the prophets, the demand for righteous conduct and the doing of justice, but above all there must be love and fear for Israel's God and submission to his behests or the punishment will be without mercy.

The chapter about setting up great stones on Mount Ebal upon which the commandments are to be written, and uttering blessings from Mount Gerizim and curses from Mount Ebal, is generally regarded as a later interpolation; but the elaborate and extravagant promise of blessing for obedience and threat of cursing for disobedience of Chapter twenty-eight are believed to form the close of the original production, to which is to be added the statement in a later chapter that Moses "wrote this law" and delivered it to the priests that had charge of the ark of the covenant, who were enjoined to read it at the end of every seven years at the feast of tabernacles before all Israel. With this exception, the last six chapters of the book are additions not germane to our present subject.

A graphic account of the effect produced by

the reading of this book of the law in its original form appears in the twenty-third chapter of the Second Book of Kings. It was probably in the exile that this code was inserted between the preliminary discourses of Moses and the final chapters of mixed material, ending with death of the "prophet" the like of whom had not risen since in Israel. But the completion and revision of the book which afterwards received the title of "Deuteronomy" was a small part of the work done in that period in developing the Jewish law as it was finally enshrined in what was canonised as the "Torah." The prophet Ezekiel, as we have seen, drew the outlines of a system for the new religious commonwealth that was to be established at Jerusalem. Partly upon those lines the fuller code was elaborated by the priests and scribes at Babylon and completed in later days at Jerusalem, when it was framed in a new account of the creation which became the impressive prelude of the whole collection, and a meagre sketch of the ante-diluvian and post-diluvian generations, the covenant with Abraham, and other mythical material, down to the theophany on Mount Sinai. This was finally interlaced with the older material, with much trimming down and fitting together.

The material of this later law, known as the "Priests' Code," is far from homogeneous; and, as it runs through the later chapters of Exodus, constitutes the bulk of Leviticus and the earlier

chapters of Numbers, and protrudes here and there in the rest of the latter book, it contains some inconsistencies and many repetitions and variations. Scholars find in chapters seventeen to twenty-six of Leviticus, with traces elsewhere, what they designate as the "Law of Holiness," of earlier origin than the rest. The final process of blending and revision was imperfectly done and has provoked much laborious study. It was eighty years after the first return of exiles under the prince Zerubbabel and the priest Jeshua, in pursuance of the edict of release by Cyrus, that another priest, Ezra, led back a contingent of those who had remained in exile, to the number of seventeen hundred and more, by authority of Artaxerxes. This was in 458 B. C. He is said to have brought with him "the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel"; but it was fourteen years later, under the administration of Nehemiah as the Persian governor, by the grace of Artaxerxes, that it was proclaimed and read "in the sight of all the people," who were pledged to obedience to it.

How much this contained of what is called the "Priests' Code," or of the older versions of "law," it is impossible to ascertain, nor does it greatly matter; but it was many years later, about 400 B. C., that the "books of Moses," in which the "Torah" was enshrined and closed against further manipulation, were finally completed and

canonised as sacred, to be known in the Greek version as the Pentateuch. Of the character of the final Mosaic legislation there is no occasion for saying much to place it in the light which it is our purpose to diffuse upon it in order to have it seen as it is, without the glamour of divinity which superstition and misguided devotion have so long preserved in spite of reason and common sense.

One main purpose which the priests of the restored temple and the new Judaism had, was to carry back all the appointments of the sacrificial, ceremonial and ritual worship which they had instituted and developed, in all their details, to the specific commands of the deity through Moses in the deserts of Sinai, and thereby to give them an authority and sanction that could not be disputed. Nothing like this form and manner of worship had been known before the exile, but it was assumed that it was because the commands of God had not been obeyed. Now a prototype of the temple with all its appliances and observances was to be created in the wilderness of Sinai, back in the remote age of the great deliverance. Accordingly it is represented that in the forty days and forty nights that Moses was in the cloud-covered Mount, whither God had called him to give him "the tables of stone, and the law and the commandments," he received the detailed instructions for the "tabernacle" and all its equipment, which

was to be the meeting place of God and his people. These instructions occupy the six chapters of Exodus from xxvi to xxxi. Six more chapters at the end of the book describe in equal detail and complete repetition the execution of the instructions.

It needs little cool reflection to realise the absurdity of supposing that all the material and workmanship described were available in that lonely desert just after the escape of this horde of bondmen from Egypt; but it is easy to conceive that it was imagined as a prefiguration of the paraphernalia of the temple. This tabernacle, or Tent of Meeting, being provided, it is made the place from which the Lord spake to Moses all his commands and instructions relating to his worship, which were to be imparted to his people, as they are contained in the Book of Leviticus and the Book of Numbers. There is little in it of high ethical significance, much that from any modern point of view is barbarous, and it is mainly of antiquarian interest, like the religious institutions of Egypt or Assyria.

The first chapters of Leviticus deal in minute detail and in language purporting to come from the deity himself, with the sacrifices and offerings, the oblations and gifts, which were to atone for a variety of trespasses and sins, and to win the favour of God, of the very kind which some of the prophets denounced as vain in the primitive forms

of their own day. With similar particularity the consecration of the priests is prescribed. Occasionally in these books an incident is introduced, possibly suggested by some experience or difficulty, but imagined as occurring in the ancient time, when this law was supposed to have been given, which is intended to impress some point deemed of great importance. Such is that of the Lord breaking out with ferocity and devouring two sons of Aaron for offering "strange fire," or burning incense without strictly observing the technical requirements. There are prescriptions regarding the animals that may be eaten and a strict prohibition of eating blood, because it contains the life. There are rules for purification from uncleanness of various kinds, loathsome details about the diagnosis and treatment of leprosy, and the forms of impurity from which men and women must be cleansed. There is a curious illustration of the conception of atonement, as it prevailed after the exile, probably borrowed, like much of the rest relating to the cultus, from the practices of the East, in the sacrifice for the sins of the whole people and their transfer to the head of a goat to be dismissed into the desert.

When it comes to the so-called law, or "covenant," of holiness, there is more about sacrifices, the slaughter of victims and purification, but this section is mainly taken up with detailed commands and prohibitions that concern personal and social

conduct. Some of these savour of the ethical principles long inculcated by those great teachers, the pre-exilic prophets, but for the most part they are prescriptions adapted to a semi-barbarous time and reflecting the conditions that were supposed to make them necessary. In this older material there are several matters which were elaborated in preceding chapters, such as those relating to leprosy, uncleanness and purification. The death penalty is freely prescribed for many offences which are of moral and social turpitude rather than of a criminal character, and some which are mere neglect of religious observances. There is a great deal of unsavoury grossness and little edification for the modern mind in this mass, though it may have been fitted for restraint and the suppression of evil tendencies in the time for which it was devised, when it was easy to fall into idolatry or be lured away by wizards and those having familiar spirits. Death was made the penalty of witchcraft, as well as profaning the sabbath, blaspheming the name of the Lord and cursing one's father or mother. There is an occasional gem glittering in the heap, like that great commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," but this is applied only to "the children of thy people."

The various Jewish feasts are instituted or newly consecrated with rules for their observance, and the sabbatical year and the year of jubilee are

prescribed with a form of observance that never proved practicable. This collection of "statutes" ends with the familiar promise of health, peace and prosperity as a reward for their observance, and threats of dire calamity if they are not obeyed. In this there is an evident retrospect of what had happened to the nation in its days of disobedience. "These," it is said, "are the statutes and judgments and laws which the Lord made between him and the children of Israel in Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses." That formula seems to have closed what is called the "law of holiness," but a later chapter is added relating to the cost of redeeming various vows, and nearly the same formula is repeated.

The alleged enumeration of tribes in the wilderness with which the Book of Numbers opens and from which it takes its title, is part of the same "priests' writing" in which these latest codes are embodied. In connection with the census of Levi the distinction between priests and Levites, which was unknown before the exile, is established, and their several functions are defined. The priests are made descendants of Aaron and his sons, while the Levites were other offspring of the tribe, whose duties were those of ministers of worship subordinate to the priests. The fact seems to be that the class of Levites consisted originally of the priests of the places of worship away from Jerusalem before the aboli-

tion of the "high places." It was the plan of Ezekiel to reduce these to a menial position in the service of the temple, but to that they would not submit, and it was the purpose of the Levitical law to give them a certain dignity as substitutes for the first born of all Israel and to make them a charge upon the people for their support. They were regarded as descendants of the mythical Levi, son of Jacob, and a tribe by themselves without any allotment of land or property, because they were to be devoted to the service of the Lord and provided for at the general expense. The original Levi, or Levite, was merely the priest of the old sanctuaries, like that whom the migrating Danites captured and carried away.

The Book of Numbers contains sundry variations upon previous statutes and laws and some new ones, such as those relating to the Nazirite's vows, the duties of priests and Levites, the observance of the passover, inheritance and the spoils of war, but in these additions there is scarcely a glimmer of anything of high ethical value. Of curious interest is one of those illustrative incidents already referred to, not unlike that of the consuming wrath of the Lord that devoured two of the sons of Aaron with fire. It is based upon or mingled with an old account of a rebellion in the wilderness headed by certain Reubenites against the authority of Moses. Possibly this Reubenite rebellion, whatever it may really have

been, in the migration from Egypt, had some relation to that mythical defilement of his father's bed by Reuben, referred to in the ancient poem. There may have been in the establishment of the Levitical system some trouble which suggested the mixing of Korah of the tribe of Levi with this revolt against divine authority, and having him and his fellow conspirators swallowed up by the earth, as an example to those who take too much upon themselves, and to show that "the man whom the Lord doth choose, he shall be holy," and not the man who sets himself up.

These Jewish laws were a human development during a period of five centuries of Israel's history. They were freely elaborated in the exile by priests and scribes, who had in mind the experience through which the nation had passed after the time of David and Solomon, when it was divided into two kingdoms, both of which had been destroyed by powerful enemies, with deportation of the ruling class, as was the practice of conquering nations at that time. It was devoutly believed that all the calamities that befel Ephraim and Judah had been brought upon them by the God of Israel as punishment for their sins, especially in falling away from his worship and lusting after other gods and the practices of their cults.

While this was believed, there was an invincible faith in the goodness of Israel's God and his love for the people of his choice, in his sacred

covenant with the ancestor of the tribes, and in the fulfilment of his promises. This faith had been deeply and powerfully impressed by the prophets before and during the exile, and was excited into new fervour on the release from captivity by the Persian conquest of Babylon. Then the devout souls of priests and scribes, in the new hope of greatness and glory for the kingdom of Zion, were intent upon establishing a system of worship which should hold the people in allegiance to the Lord and keep them from contamination by association with worshippers of inferior deities. Hence the elaborate system of sacrifices, observances and ceremonies which they devised, based upon the doctrine that the people and all they had belonged to their God and must be devoted to his service in order to save them from such calamities as their fathers had passed through, and to make of them a great and prosperous people who should ultimately rule the nations by the power of that God, to whom they were to devote their lives, their persons and their property.

While the ethical principles inherited from the prophets were not lost, their vitality was impaired in the stress laid upon formal observances and ceremonies. As a whole this law, as finally accumulated and consecrated in those days of submission to Persian authority and of deferred hopes, is an unattractive and uninspiring mass of

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dead letter, of interest chiefly as an illustration of the growth and decay of a people. Its ethical standard is not higher than that which was already appearing in Greek literature and philosophy. Even the conception of deity after the exile, at least among the priests who assumed to administer the law and to control the worship, was less lofty than that to be found in the poetry and philosophy of Greece at the time of the second temple. Nevertheless, the influence of this Mosaic heritage upon the later religious development and upon the destiny of mankind for ages has no parallel in human history.

XI

THE PRIESTLY HISTORY

AFTER the priestly commonwealth of the Jews and the new sacrificial and ritual system of the restored temple had been established for some time, and the law had long been closed against further change, except that wrought in its spirit and application by the endless interpretation and comment of rabbis, the need appears to have been felt of recasting the history of the people to make it conform more closely and consistently with the doctrine of God's sovereignty over his chosen people. What was especially sought was support for the theory that the existing development had not only a divine origin in the laws of Moses, but divine direction throughout the history of the kingdoms. Judea, Syria and Asia Minor had passed under the rule of Greece after the conquests of Alexander, and the hope of secular power for the Jewish state had grown dim, though it did not perish. It must have been about the end of the fourth century B. C., not far from the year 300, that a temple priest or Levite, evidently associated with the ritual worship, undertook the task of recasting the history.

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First there was the period of the return from exile which was the prelude to the establishment of the ecclesiastical regime which had not been covered in any existing record. For this there appears to have been some imperfect and disjointed material, part of it a fragmentary memoir by Ezra, the priest who had brought back the contingent that returned in 458 B. C. by permission of Artaxerxes, and another part a more complete memoir of Nehemiah, the Jewish cup-bearer of that monarch, who some twelve years later had been permitted to go to Jerusalem to assist in rebuilding the walls and restoring the worship, and was made governor of the Persian province. There were older documents, partly in the Aramaic tongue, relating chiefly to the events of the first return under Zerubbabel and the priest Jeshua, or Joshua. Much doubt has been cast upon the authenticity of this older material, but all was freely used by the compiler of the present books with variations of his own.

It is the conclusion of the learned in such matters that the books known as "Ezra" and "Nehemiah," originally one and without title, forming a kind of pendant to the Book of "Chronicles," were compiled by the author of that book before his main work was undertaken. It will be observed that the two works are clumsily linked together by a repetition at the end of Chronicles of the opening verses of Ezra, which

breaks off in the middle of a sentence. It does not matter which was completed first, but it will be convenient to glance at the composition of "Ezra" and "Nehemiah" before considering the more systematic production in which the pragmatic purpose is more conspicuous.

Apart from the fact that the version of the decree of Cyrus with which the book of Ezra begins does not agree with that said to have been afterwards looked up by order of Darius, there is no reason for accepting it as in the least authentic in form. The language relating to the "God of heaven" and his "house" and his "people" is not that which the Persian monarch would be likely to use. The statement about the bringing back of treasures from Babylon by "priests and Levites," before the distinction between these had been established, is that of the Chronicler himself, and is of dubious accuracy. The enumeration of the returning families was part of the older Hebrew material and may or may not be of historical validity. In the account of the setting up of an altar and laying the foundations of the temple, the compiler carries back ceremonies of his own day to celebrate the event. The account is fanciful.

The desire of those who had remained in the land to join in rebuilding the temple was repulsed by the returned exiles, which led to hindrances that delayed the work until the time of Darius.

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The account of the plots, the charges of rebellion against Persian authority, and the appeal to Darius and its result, is drawn from the old Aramaic document and is not to be trusted as history, though it may reflect actual events in vague outline. It mixes occurrences in the time of Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes in a confused way, and leaves the result in doubt, but the chronicler interjects after a statement that the elders of the Jews finally "builded and prospered" through the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah, the alleged fact that "they builded and finished it (the temple), according to the commandment of God, and according to the decree of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes." Such a decree might span about a hundred years and it would be a still longer time before such a celebration of the passover as is described could have taken place. The description is not more anachronistic than the reference to the "King of Assyria whose heart the Lord had turned to his people to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel."

These disjointed and uncertain statements serve to bring us down to the time of Ezra. The introductory statement regarding his permission to go up to Jerusalem seems to have been drawn in substance from his own memoir, but the alleged copy of a letter of Artaxerxes, said to have been given to him, is from the doubtful Aramaic docu-

ment. The rest of the book is made up, with some modification by the Chronicler, from the authentic memoir of the priest himself. It relates chiefly to the journey to Jerusalem; the mortification of the good man on finding that Jews had intermarried with "the peoples of the land," so that the "holy seed had mingled themselves" with the unholy, his confession and prayer in behalf of the people on account of this transgression, the solemn pledge and covenant against its continuance, and a register of the chief offenders who had taken¹ "strange wives."

With an abrupt break from Ezra the memoir of Nehemiah is introduced, which gives a simple and straightforward account of his mission to Jerusalem through the favour of Artaxerxes, and the trouble he had in accomplishing his purpose on account of the plots and intrigues of adversaries who sought to thwart his efforts. Nehemiah appears in his own account in a pleasing light, as a devout but shrewd and capable man, who trusted in the Lord but omitted no precaution or effort on his own part to make the Lord's help effective. He had a naive way of discerning the purpose of the Lord and circumventing his enemies, invoking at times blessings upon himself, and curses upon them. The genealogy of "them which came up at the first" Nehemiah appears to have found at Jerusalem and attached to his account of building up the walls of the city,

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and the compiler of the varied material did not omit it, though he had already introduced it in the Book of Ezra.

The account of the reading of the book of the law and the ceremonies attending it is regarded as having been drawn in substance from the memoir of Ezra, while the reference to the distribution of families and similar statistical material is from uncertain sources. The chronicler describes the dedication of the walls and the ceremony of purification in his own way, by a free use of the materials in his hands, but in the last chapter of the Book of Nehemiah, after the first three verses, we have again the unadulterated memoir of the energetic representative of Persian authority and the faithful guide of his own struggling people.

He had returned from Persia after an absence and found things going wrong. He took them in hand with characteristic zeal, giving special attention to enforcing a strict observance of the Sabbath and putting a stop to that nefarious practice of marrying "strange women" on the part of the priests and Levites. We would gladly know more of Nehemiah and his reforms, but in this fragmentary and incoherent work we only get vivid glimpses of a transition period in the life of Jerusalem, sadly at variance with what the prophets and poets had hoped and prayed for and preliminary to something very different from what had been promised of national power and glory.

Turning now to the Book of Chronicles, originally one but in modern versions divided into two, we find that it covers the period anterior to the reign of David with genealogies, beginning with Adam, with occasional reference to legendary incidents. There is little more than a string of names, drawn from the Pentateuch, before the families of Israel are taken up, and no reference is made to the deluge or to the Chaldean origin of Abraham. The names in all these genealogies are mainly those of places and clans, which were commonly personified in the early writings. Numerous instances might be cited. Precedence is given to the family of Judah, who is said to have had five sons, three of them the offspring of a Canaanitess, and two of his daughter-in-law Tamar. David is made to descend from one of the latter, and the genealogy of his "house" is apparently carried down to the writer's own time through Zerubbabel and several succeeding generations. There is much confusion in the bald way of stating the names, originally without punctuation, but nowhere else is there any record of descendants of Zerubbabel, the prince who led from Babylon the first contingent of returning exiles.

After the tracing of David's line to the end, there is a repetition of the genealogy of Judah with five sons, but those of Canaanite maternity are omitted. It should be noticed that while in

the ancient story the sons of Jacob were left in Egypt, and an interval of four hundred years is said to have elapsed before the deliverance of their descendants, there is here no recognition of such a break, and the names of tribes are used as those of men who actually peopled the country. There is, in fact, no allusion to the bondage and deliverance. Some hint is given of the dispersion of Simeon and it is said that Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, East of the Jordan, lapsed into idolatry and that God stirred up the spirit of Pul, King of Assyria and Tiglath-Pileser, King of Assyria, and they carried away the offending tribes "unto this day." Historically, Pul and Tiglath-Pileser were the same person, who invaded Syria and Samaria and may have transported the leading Gileadites, as they were called in his day, though there is no mention of that in the Book of Kings. It is incidentally stated that Reuben's birthright had passed to Joseph, as the idolatry of the former was apparently considered by this writer as the defilement of his father's bed, but Judah had "prevailed above his brethren and of him came the prince."

The priestly writer takes occasion in setting forth the genealogy of Levi to derive from him the priests as the sons of Aaron and the Levites as other descendants, and to assign them their several functions, though these distinctions were unknown before the exile. He even enlarges

upon the duties of the Levites in the service of song, which they were "set over" by David, a service that only existed in the restored temple, five or six centuries after David's time. Little account is made of Joseph, the special hero of the early writers, because he was the progenitor of that kingdom of Jeroboam which God destroyed for its sins, but throughout the Chronicles Benjamin is attached to Judah. There is a curious illustration of the personal way in which the names of tribes and families are used, in the statement that when certain sons of Ephraim were slain by the men of Gath "Ephraim their father mourned many days and his brethren came to comfort him." Then he proceeded to beget other sons. This is said of the supposed son of Joseph who never left Egypt.

Appended to these genealogies is a brief statement of the distribution of families on the return from the exile with special reference to the priests and Levites. All this is preliminary to recasting the history from the death of Saul, taking incidental notice of the northern Kingdom where it closely touches the course of events in Judah. Much space is given to the reign of David, the revered and glorified founder of the kingdom of Judah and the exemplar of all that was excellent and devoted in the service of the God of Israel, as he was viewed at the time of the writer. He appears as a wholly different character from that

of the Book of Samuel. There is no reference to his early freebooting days or his relations with Saul or the Philistines. The quasi historical account begins with the death of Saul, which is construed as a penalty for his trespass in not keeping the word of the Lord and in asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, followed by the accession of David to the throne, first at Hebron and then at Jerusalem. Such account as is given of these events and of the "mighty men" of David is drawn from that of the Book of Samuel, with such variation as suited the purpose of the writer.

A few later incidents of a historical character are drawn from the same source, but everything which might throw discredit upon the king is omitted, though the mutilating of conquered and captive enemies with saws and harrows and axes seems not to have been regarded as of that kind. There is nothing of the brutal doings of Joab, the wrong done to Uriah the Hittite or scandals in the royal family; nothing of Absalom's rebellion and the king's humiliation; nothing of David's physical or mental condition before his death or the incidents attending the succession as related in the first two chapters of Kings. The only case of offending God that is referred to is that seemingly innocent one of numbering the people, and the reason for not omitting that is that it led to the purchase of the threshing floor of the Jebu-

site, which was to become the site of "the house of God." But it was Satan, or the adversary, and not God himself, that put the king up to that sin. In the original version that incident may have been intended as the explanation either of an epidemic or of the acquisition of the temple site.

The leading feature of the bleached and recoloured story of David's reign is the attribution to him, not only of the founding of the temple and the preparation of all the plans and materials of its construction and equipment as a place of worship, but of the organisation of its service in accordance with the methods developed after the exile. On every ceremonial occasion throughout the Book of Chronicles the priests and Levites are brought in with the music and singing and ritual exercises which had never been dreamed of in connection with the sacrifices of the first temple. They even accompany the bringing of the ark of the covenant, first from the house of Abinadab and then from that of Obed-Edom, the incidents of which are taken from the Book of Samuel. The king is said to have ordained a regular service of priests and Levites with musical instruments and singing before the ark "continually," and to have dedicated that shrine with a hymn of thanks, which is made up of parts of three different psalms written long after David's time. The first instructions of the Lord by the prophet Nathan re-

garding the building of his "house," and the king's prayer of gratitude, are repeated with little variation from Samuel; but the account of the preparation, the collecting of material and the elaborate system providing for the services of the temple and the administration of the kingdom, are original with the Chronicler, though he may have drawn from previously written sources that we know not of.

The unhistorical character of all this is plain, not only from its inconsistency with the older accounts and with the circumstances and conditions of David's time, but from the obvious exaggeration of what is stated as fact. For instance, the gold and silver said to have been collected for use in building and decorating the temple and providing it with the appliances of worship, estimated according to the value of the "talent" in the writer's time, would have exceeded the sum of \$7,000,000,000, which is many times the wealth of all the East in that form in those days. Exaggeration of a similar kind characterises other parts of this chronicle of the kings of Judah, such as statements about their armed forces. David was said to have more than 1,500,000 of warriors and Jehoshaphat an army of over 1,100,000. These preposterous statistics are little more definite in significance than the favourite simile that likened multitudes to the sand which is upon the seashore.

David needed no Abishag to cherish an anæmic body in his last days, but died, not only "full of days, riches and honour," but in full possession of his wonderful faculties and devoted piety, departing with a prayer of blessing and gratitude and an edifying farewell to "all the congregation" of the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, the captains and rulers and mighty men of his peaceful realm. Solomon succeeded without any such commotion as is described in the Book of Kings and with no occasion for avenging past wrongs or guarding against future trouble. The story of his going up to the "high place" of Gibeon to sacrifice is repeated, but the "Tent of Meeting," of which the compiler of Kings knew nothing, was there, and it was not in a dream that the Lord appeared to him and rewarded him with "riches, wealth and honour," as well as the wisdom and knowledge for which he asked.

Solomon is not magnified in this account as much as he is in the older one, but he is relieved of some of the grievous faults imputed to him there. He is placed distinctly lower than the exalted and revered figure of his father, and in all that pertained to the building and dedicating of the temple he only carried out his father's explicit directions. The account of the dedication in Kings is a relatively late production, but it is modified, elaborated and extended in Chronicles, and the Levitical ceremony of music and song is freely in-

roduced. There is a mere statement of Solomon's joint enterprise with Hiram, or Hiram, of Tyre for obtaining gold from Ophir, but the Phœnician only furnished him with vessels and seamen. The story of the visit of the Queen of Sheba is repeated and the King's wisdom, wealth and power are descanted upon, but we are not told of any marvellous knowledge of animals and plants or production of proverbs and songs. There is a bare allusion to his having married a daughter of Pharaoh, but nothing of his loving many strange women or having seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, or of his having been led away from the worship of the Lord to the idolatry of other gods. Neither is there anything of the revolt of Jeroboam, or of the greater part of the kingdom being rent away on account of his sins, though in connection with the revolt from his son it is mentioned that Jeroboam the son of Nebat returned from Egypt when he heard of it, whither he had "fled from the presence of King Solomon." Of the King's death it is only said that he "slept with his fathers" and was "buried in the City of David his father."

Throughout the account of the kings of Judah, from Rehoboam to Zedekiah and the destruction of Jerusalem, there is the distinct purpose of emphasising the theocratic doctrine that prosperity and victory always followed obedience and fidelity to the God of Israel, and that reverse or calam-

ity was invariably the result of incurring his displeasure by some offence against his law or disobedience to "his word." Rehoboam is not so unqualifiedly condemned for doing evil in the sight of the Lord as in Kings, and there is a fuller account of his reign. His prudent failure to attempt to suppress the Ephraimite rebellion was due to the warning of a prophet, and during the years that he was successfully strengthening and establishing the Kingdom of Judah his people walked "in the way of David and Solomon," but after that the king forsook the law of the Lord, which accounts for Shishak of Egypt having invaded the country and plundered the temple and the palace. The only reason why the king and the city of Jerusalem were not destroyed altogether at that time was that Rehoboam "humbled himself" and "the wrath of the Lord was turned from him."

His son Abijah, or Abijam, received scant notice in the Book of Kings, as he "walked in all the sins of his father," but the chronicler credits him with a notable victory over Jeroboam of Israel, or rather he credits the victory to the Lord, as the result of the king's condemnation of the recreancy of Jeroboam's people and his admission of his own dependence upon the God of his fathers. Abijah is said to have had an army of 400,000 against 800,000 on the side of his enemy, but the Lord saw to it that 500,000

of the latter were slain and that several towns were captured. This victory is represented as having been fatal to Jeroboam and nothing is said to the discredit of Abijah, who waxed mighty and took unto himself fourteen wives and begat twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters, though he reigned only three years.

Abijah's victories seem to have resulted in ten years of peace for his son Asa, but in doing that which was "good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God," Asa had occasion to clean out idolatrous practices that had grown up under his father, even to destroying an "abominable image" which his mother had "for an Asherah." Notwithstanding his period of peace and prosperity, he had an army of no less than 580,000, but when an Ethiopian army of a million came up against him he had to call upon the Lord for help, which did not fail him. The whole Ethiopian horde was destroyed "before the Lord and before his host," and cities were taken with much spoil. The incident of purchasing the alliance of Benhadad of Syria against Baasha of Israel, related in the Book of Kings, is repeated. Notwithstanding its successful result the king was rebuked by Hanani, the Seer, for not relying wholly upon the Lord, implying that if he had done so he might have conquered both Baasha and Benhadad. Perhaps it was for this fault that Asa was afflicted with gout, at least, was "diseased

in the feet," and "yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord but to the physicians."

These things are stated here as illustrating the obviously unhistorical character of these accounts and their purpose of impressing the people for whom the chronicler wrote with the doctrine of entire dependence upon God and obedience to his commands as the sole means of attaining success or escaping calamity. This appears still more strikingly in the account of the reign of Jehoshaphat, which is disjointed and confused in the Book of Kings, but is presented quite systematically here. This king is magnified above all others that reigned in Judah after David and Solomon. The Lord is said to have been with him "because he walked in the first ways of his father David."

He is not only credited with removing the high places and the Asherim but with sending out princes and Levites and priests throughout the kingdom to teach the book of the law to the people, a book which did not exist within the meaning of the chronicler at that time any more than did the orders of priests and Levites. But the result was that the fear of the Lord fell upon the kingdoms round about and they incontinently sent rich gifts unto King Jehoshaphat. The story of his joining Ahab of Israel in a campaign against Syria is repeated from Kings without substantial variation and with no more serious consequence than a rebuke from Jehu the son of

Hanani the Seer for helping the wicked and loving them that hate the Lord. The "good things" found in him saved him from the wrath that was upon him "before the Lord." As if to make amends for this fault, the king is represented as setting judges in the land from the Levites and priests and heads of families and enjoining upon them righteous judgment "not for men but for the Lord."

After that a great multitude of the children of Moab and the children of Ammon were reported to be coming up against him "from beyond the sea from Syria," wherever that could have been; and though he had an army of 1,160,000 "mighty men of valour," he "feared and set himself to seek unto the Lord." He proclaimed a fast and gathered the people together and prayed the Lord to save them in their affliction as they had "no might against this great company" that came up against them, and knew not what to do. As a result of this reliance upon the Lord instead of his huge army, the spirit of the Lord came upon a son of a Levite to assure him that he need not fight, but only had to stand still and "see the salvation of the Lord, O Judah and Jerusalem." So they only worshipped "with an exceeding loud voice," and the next day with the ever present Levites they sang unto the Lord and praised the beauty of holiness. The Lord saw to the destruction of the children of Moab,

the children of Ammon and the inhabitants of Mount Seir, and Jehoshaphat and his army had only to gather the spoil, which took three days, and return to Jerusalem in triumph to the music of psalteries and harps and trumpets.

This may be taken as an extreme example of the chronicler's manner of writing history. He made no use of the story in Kings of Jehoshaphat's joining with Jehoram of Israel in an expedition against Moab, which did not result so triumphantly. Mention is made from that source of his joining with Ahaziah to build ships for the trade to Tarshish, which resulted in the ships being broken up because he "did very wickedly" in joining with the King of Israel in the enterprise, as a prophet did not fail to inform him.

The older account of Jehoshaphat's sinful son Jehoram who married a daughter of Ahab is somewhat improved upon, and he is made to die of a dreadful disease of the bowels in consequence of his sins. A novel feature of this version of his reign is a written message from the prophet Elijah warning him of his fate for following the example of Ahab and for slaying his brethren who were better than himself. The account of the brief reign of Ahaziah, the usurpation of Athaliah, the queen mother, the hiding of Joash and his being raised to the throne at the age of seven by a plot led by the priest Jehoiada, is repeated with variations from the Book of Kings.

The chief variation consists in bringing in the Levites to take the place of the military men of the older version, as more appropriate to a scene occurring in the house of the Lord.

The account of the repairs to this sacred edifice and collecting funds for the purpose in the reign of Joash is materially modified in order to give the priests and Levites their proper place in it. The fact that Joash came to a violent end had to be more satisfactorily accounted for. So it is made to appear that after the death of the aged priest Jehoiada, the king went sadly wrong in forsaking the house of the Lord and serving the Asherim and idols, and, when remonstrated with by the son of the dead priest, having that rash mentor stoned to death. As a result a Syrian army came to Judah and Jerusalem and were permitted by the Lord to play havoc and carry off spoil to Damascus. Moreover, the king was afflicted with "great diseases" and was killed in his bed by his own servants and was not buried in the sepulchres of the kings. All the Book of Kings has about this calamitous end of the reign of Joash is a statement that Hazael of Syria came up against Jerusalem and the king hired him with the treasures of the temple and palace to go away, after which his servants made a conspiracy and slew him in the house of Millo, but he was nevertheless "buried with his fathers in the city of David."

Amaziah the son of Joash seems to have taken his father's fate to heart, at least for a time. The compiler of Kings says that he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, "yet not like his father David," but "according to all things as Joash his father did." The chronicler says that he "did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart." Both accounts of his reign are brief and do not vary in any significant way; but in that of his son,—Azariah in Kings and Uzziah in Chronicles,—the author of the latter book gives another striking illustration of his manner of revising history with a purpose. Although it is said that Azariah reigned fifty-two years and did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, except that the "high places" were not removed, against which there was no condemnation until the promulgation of the Deuteronomic law more than a hundred years later, the only fact alleged about him by the compiler of the Book of Kings is that the Lord smote him "so that he was a leper unto the day of his death and dwelt in a several house," while his son Jotham judged the people.

Why should he be smitten with leprosy if he did that which was right? The chronicler undertakes to explain that in accordance with the doctrine of the theocratic rule in Judah. As long as Uzziah sought the Lord, God made him to prosper, and evidence is given of his success in

war with a "mighty power" of 307,500 men under 2,600 "mighty men of valour," heads of father's houses, and of his building of towers and battlements and engines of war. He also had cattle and vineyards and fruitful fields, but when he was strong, his heart was lifted up and he trespassed against the Lord by going into the temple to burn incense upon the altar. This served at once to explain his leprosy and to give warning that the priest's office in the temple was not to be usurped with impunity by the secular authority, however high.

The reign of Jotham is dismissed almost as briefly as in Kings and with no material variation, but characteristic changes are made by the chronicler in the older account of those of Ahaz and Hezekiah. It is agreed that Ahaz was altogether a bad king, but it will be remembered that the alliance of the kings of Israel and Syria against Judah was regarded with contempt by the prophet Isaiah, and that it was really defeated by Ahaz hiring the Assyrian Tiglath-Pileser to attack Damascus. But the chronicler declares that the Lord delivered Ahaz into the hand of the king of Syria, who carried away a great multitude of captives to Damascus, and into the hand of the king of Israel, who "slew in Judah a hundred and twenty thousand in one day" and carried away two hundred thousand captives with much spoil. There is an edifying story of the release of these

captives, but Ahaz continued to be pestered with enemies, and Tiglath-Pileser, instead of helping him, "distressed him," and had to be hired with treasures of the house of the Lord to leave him in peace.

Hezekiah, as we know, set out to reform the worship and followed closely in the footsteps of the great exemplar David; but with the chronicler the purifying of the temple and the re-establishment of the sacrifices and offerings had to be assigned to the priests and Levites, with all the ritual accompaniment of his own time. He also has the passover and the feasts celebrated in a manner unknown in the time of Hezekiah, and not at all in keeping with the spirit of Isaiah, who according to the older book was the chief adviser of that king. In this book the prophet is pushed out of sight by the priests and Levites and is only mentioned in connection with the invasion of Sennacherib, the account of which is abridged from the Book of Kings, and as the author of a "vision" in which the acts of Hezekiah were written, meaning no doubt the narrative parts of the "prophecy" which relate to this reign. The version of Sennacherib's discomfiture, in answer to the prayers of the king and the prophet, is that "the Lord sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria," so that he "returned with shame of face

to his own land." The sickness of Hezekiah is attributed to his heart being "lifted up," which brought wrath upon him, but he humbled himself and got well, and the more serious consequences of wrath did not come in his day.

The compiler of the Book of Kings, champion of theocracy as he was, had nothing but threats of disaster and retribution for the long and evil reign of Manasseh. He tells of nothing befalling the wicked monarch himself or the nation in his time, and has no explanation of his being permitted to reign fifty-five years. This was obviously a serious lack from the point of view of the author of Chronicles. So he brings "the captains of the host of the King of Assyria" upon Manasseh and has him carried away to Babylon in chains and fetters. There in his distress he "humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers" and prayed unto him. As a result of his entreaty he was brought back to Jerusalem, where he "took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the Lord," and built up the altar of the Lord and offered thereon sacrifices of peace offerings and of thanksgiving, and "commanded Judah to serve the Lord, the God of Israel." This is not history, but it was necessary to vindicate the doctrine of theocracy as it was understood in the time of the writer, three centuries and more after Manasseh's day. As Amon reverted to the evil part of his father's example and did not

humble himself he was assassinated in two years.

According to the older records the reform in the worship at Jerusalem was instituted by Josiah as the result of the discovery of the "book of the law," but as the chronicler attributes everything relating to the temple worship, in its origin and in its perfection, to the prevision and instruction of David, he repeats the story of Josiah from Kings with considerable curtailment and makes use of it chiefly to inject his priests and Levites into all the proceedings and especially into the celebration²¹ of the passover. He makes no attempt to ³account for the unhappy fate of Josiah, but says¹⁷ that Jeremiah lamented him and that "all the singing men and singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations unto this day."

The remaining events to the destruction of Jerusalem and the "carrying away" to Babylon are disposed of in the most summary way, and the exile is spoken of as the fulfilment of the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah "until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths, for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfil three score years and ten." The extent of the exile before the decree of Cyrus was less than fifty years, but that it was a long Sabbath for the land was an attractive idea. The interest of this Book of Chronicles lies chiefly in its exhibition of the spirit of the post-exilic community and the use it made of past history for admonition and correction.

XII

ILLUSTRATIVE TALES — RUTH, JONAH, ESTHER

THE Jews in the centuries before the Christian era included in the mass of their literature which they deemed sacred certain stories of late origin, because they were supposed to illustrate some principle or give sanction to some practice of their religion or of their polity, which was always closely associated with their religion. The notion so long cherished that whatever they saw fit to include was divine truth led devout readers of that literature to treat every work of fiction or narrative as if it were a statement of fact. The charming idyllic tale of "Ruth," because its scene was laid in the dim ages of the past, "when the judges judged," was assumed to be old and to give a truthful account of the origin of the family of David. This may be why in the old collections it was placed after the Book of Judges and became a kind of pendant to it.

In point of fact, it was written after the exile, though learned authorities differ in giving it a date. They are not agreed upon the motive of its writing or of its being included in what we have been treating as the epic of the Jewish peo-

ple. It does not greatly matter to us, so long as it was preserved as a picture in that great work. The most plausible explanation is that it was produced not long after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, as a gentle protest against the harsh measures taken regarding those who had married "strange wives," that is, women who were not of the "holy seed" of Israel. It tells in the most enticing way of one foreign damsel in the olden time who had married a child of one of Israel's noblest families, when his parents were driven into exile by famine, a favourite mode of explaining expatriation; and who returned to Bethlehem-Judah with the mother-in-law, after she had been bereft of her own family, to be taken as a wife by the noblest kinsman of her deceased husband, in accordance with the law of Israel. To give special force to the tale as a lesson on the subject of such marriages, this new husband is represented to have been the direct ancestor of Israel's greatest king and most revered character.

Neither this representation nor the scrap of genealogy appended to the story by a later hand, probably drawn from the genealogy of Judah in Chronicles, affords the slightest evidence of historical fact, and all the learned discussion on that point is to little purpose. The only tangible basis upon which even a "Midrasch" could found a claim that David really descended from Boaz and Ruth is the statement in the Book of Samuel

that, when he was an outlaw and Saul was seeking his life, he placed his parents under the care of the king of Moab. Even that is of doubtful authenticity; but, as there is no other allusion to David's descent from a daughter of Moab and no reference to it in the genealogies of Chronicles, it is absurd to take the representation in a fanciful tale, written five or six hundred years after David's time, as evidence of a historical fact. That kind of representation was common in regard to much more serious matters, such as attributing all the law to Moses and all the psalms to David. Why deprive the Jews of the ancient liberty of the imagination? Ruth is one of the most charming idyls that have come down to us from ancient times, and we have a right to enjoy it as such, without regard to the real ancestry of David or the woes of them that were torn from their alien wives in the hard times in Judea after the exile.

Another tale of still later origin, which has no particular charm and only escapes being grotesque because it makes no pretension to relating fact, but has a serious purpose in illustrating a principle and impressing a lesson, is that of the prophet Jonah. There was a prophet of that name in Israel in the time of Jeroboam II, and there was no scruple about making him the hero of the story, though he is not placed in either a heroic or a prophetic light. It is absurd to talk about the

reality of his experience in trying to escape the Lord when commanded to go to Nineveh and cry out against the wickedness of that great city, and living three days in the belly of a fish whence he utters a prayer made up of scraps from psalms wholly irrelevant to his situation. But to accept that as fact is but little more of a strain upon common sense than to believe that the great Assyrian capital repented in sack cloth and ashes and turned away the wrath of God because a Hebrew prophet walked a day's journey into the city and declared that it would be overthrown in forty days.

We see no reason why the prophet should be so petulant with the Lord because his direful prediction did not come true at once, in spite of the universal repentance and humiliation in Nineveh. He had more reason to be grieved when the gourd that grew up in a night to shield his head from the sun while he waited to see the city's destruction withered, leaving his head unprotected; but it does not seem to be pity for the gourd that made him grieve when he felt no pity for the population that he had doomed to destruction. Now this story is not ridiculous, because it was not intended to be taken as a narrative of fact. It is not skilful as a work of literary art, but it has that marvellous brevity of graphic realism in which Semitic and Arabian story tellers have been adept "even unto this day," however improbable or impossible their statements.

It also impresses the lesson that Israel's God was not so implacable that when he uttered a threat of destruction he was bound to execute it, even though the people against whom it was directed repented of their iniquity and turned to him. It may likewise have been intended to convey the lesson that those who are commissioned to speak for the Lord cannot evade the duty with impunity. Perhaps it was intended to allay the bitterness of those in later Israel who resented the failure of the Lord to destroy the nations that had been its oppressors, for those Jews cherished an intense hatred of their enemies. As it was included in a "sacred" collection, these various motives may be reasonably inferred, and modern interpretation may make it apply to the mercy and forgiveness of the Almighty for individual sinners who repent and humble themselves, though that was no part of the original intent. This little "book" of Jonah has from the first been classed among the "minor prophets," for no reason except that it bears the name of a prophet mentioned in the Book of Kings, who is the chief character in the story. It is not the work of a prophet and is not a prophecy in any sense of the word.

There is another story of still later origin, the motive of which is quite different from that of Jonah. It illustrates, even glorifies, the pride and arrogance of the Jews under their oppressors, when they were ruled by Syrian kings, and makes

their hatred triumph over their enemies in the most ruthless and brutal manner, and without the least compunction. It is not in the spirit of humility and submission, generally inculcated in the law and prophets and in many of the psalms, but quite the contrary. The story of Esther was probably not written earlier than the first half of the second century B. C., perhaps in the hated reign of Antiochus Epiphanes; and it may have been intended to stimulate the spirit of revolt or at least of brave endurance. It is in no sense religious and it makes no reference to the God of Israel, unless it be covertly in the message of Mordecai, warning Esther that if she did not make her appeal to the king, "then shall relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, and thou and thy father's house shall perish." There is no reason for the assumption that there was an avoidance of the "sacred name" from any scruple. In spirit the book is far from being religious, and it was finally included in the Jewish canon of scripture only because it was supposed to account for the origin of the festival of the Purim. But not only is the account fictitious; its explanation of the Purim has no foundation in fact.

To accept the book of Esther as historical or as in any sense a narrative of facts is no more rational than believing in Jonah's three days' sojourn in the stomach of a "great fish." It is full of improbabilities that can be tested. It is a clever

work of fiction, highly suggestive, in its realistic quality, of the Arabian Tales. The fact that Ahasuerus was a historical king of Persia, the Xerxes of the Greeks, is no more reason for accepting the story as true than the fact that Haroun al Raschid was a real person is ground for believing all the tales in which he figures. The entire picture of the Persian Court and its manners in the time of Xerxes is surely fanciful, and Shushan, or Susa, was not a palace or a castle, but the capital of the Persian empire. Though that empire was great at the time, it did not have the extent attributed to it in the story and did not consist of a hundred and twenty-seven provinces.

Mordecai is said to have been one of the exiles carried to Babylon with Jeconiah, or Jehoiachin. That was in 597 B. C. and the reign of Xerxes did not begin until 485, a hundred and twelve years later. This crafty and implacable Jew, who contrived to make his cousin the queen of Persia and to get himself exalted to the highest place in the kingdom, is represented to be a descendant of Kish of Benjamin, father of Saul, the first King of Israel, while his arch-enemy, Haman, was of the traditional enemies of Israel, the Amalekites, perhaps a descendant of that King Agag said to have been slain by the prophet Samuel, as he is called the Agagite. What is the probability that the king of Persia in its proudest days would have made an Amalekite his chief minister, to be suc-

ceeded by a Jewish exile as the man whom the king most delighted to honour, or that he would have taken a Jewess as his favourite queen without knowing her origin? That he would have put away his first queen for the reason alleged, or that he would have commanded her to exhibit her beauty before the revellers at a feast, is sufficiently incredible, and if the queen refused to appear it would be greatly to her credit.

The fact that the names of the chief actors in the story are drawn from Babylonian or Elamite mythology, is another evidence of its purely fictitious character. Mordecai was derived from Morduk and Esther from Ishtar, and Vashti and Haman were names from the mythology of Elam, the most ancient part of Persia. But there is nothing in the whole story that conforms to human probability. The refusal of Mordecai to do reverence, at least in form, to Haman as the king's chief minister, was not like a Jew of any date; and if Haman had been a real Persian minister in the king's favour, and if he chose to take note of the incident at all, he would have made short work of the show of arrogance, instead of casting lots for all the months of the year to fix a date upon which to exterminate all the Jews in the empire. Making this use of the lot explain the name Purim would seem trivial even if Pur meant lot, which it did not in any known language. That the king should be bribed with ten thousand talents of silver,

to be plundered from the Jews, to consent to this wholesale slaughter throughout the provinces and in "Shushan the palace," it is ridiculous to suppose.

The story of Mordecai, through his cousin and former ward the queen, averting this slaughter and turning Haman's scheme upon his own head, is cleverly and effectively told; but when it comes to inducing the Persian potentate to permit the Jews in the provinces to slay "of them that hated them seventy-five thousand," to kill five hundred in Shushan on two successive days, and to have the ten sons of Haman hanged on the second day after having slain them on the first, credulity is put to a pretty severe strain. In all this the fair Esther appears in anything but a pleasing light; and Mordecai in his exaltation is simply loathsome. But then, this is a story, no more to be taken as matter of fact than those of the "Calendars" of Bagdad. It is interesting, not as accounting for the Purim or illustrating the care of Israel's God over his oppressed people, but as illustrating the character and spirit of the Jews in Judea in the last centuries before the Christian era, the spirit of the Maccabees and of those who crucified the gentle teacher of Nazareth. The marvel is that Christian preachers and teachers should so long strive to make it a part of "divine truth."

XIII

LYRICS, SONGS, AND HYMNS

ISRAEL did not differ from other primitive peoples in the order of its literary development. At the beginning of its history as a nation, or as a congeries of affiliated tribes and clans, it is uncertain what language it had, and it was some time before it adopted writing from the Phœnicians. All transmitted expression was oral, and it naturally took the shape of myths and stories which varied in form and substance. To aid memory and preserve the form, metrical or lyrical expression was an early development, and after writing came into use this attained variety and symmetry and became more and more artistic with the advancement of the people. Reference has been made in the early part of this volume to collections of ancient songs and chants, in which the deeds of heroes and warriors and the utterances of leaders of men were embalmed in memory, to be written down at a later time and to become the basis of more enduring literature. Glittering fragments of these are found imbedded in the early narratives, and there is evidence of more underlying the surface. The oldest that seems fairly complete, though sadly

mutilated like so much other exhumed treasure of the past, is the "Song of Deborah" in the Book of Judges. Next in antiquity of those preserved is David's elegy on the death in battle of Saul and Jonathan, which is said to have been written afterwards in the "Book of Jasher." There is also a strophe attributed to the same royal poet on the death of Abner at the hand of Joab. What more of his may have been taught or written is not recorded.

The "Blessing of Jacob," setting forth characteristics of the personified tribes, and the vaticinations about Israel imputed to Balaam of Peor, antedate the division of the kingdom and are older than the narratives in which they are embodied; but the so-called "Blessing of Moses" is a product of the northern kingdom in a time of its prosperity, perhaps after the victories of Joash over Benhadad II of Syria. What is commonly called the "Song of Moses" in the preceding chapter of Deuteronomy is a much later production. It looks back upon the history of the people from the time after the exile, rehearsing their conduct and its consequences in the form of prediction. It is plainly a retrospect, ending with a promise of vengeance upon the adversaries of the Lord and expiation for what his people have suffered for their own wrongdoing. It is represented as a song dictated to Moses by God himself, to be a witness when evils and troubles should have befallen the

people, as it was foreseen that they would. Moses himself is made to say that he knows that after his death they would corrupt themselves and turn aside from the way that he had commanded, and that evil would befall them "in the latter days." The song was written after the event as a justification of the ways of God in dealing with his people.

There are many lyrical passages in the writings of the prophets, some of them of a highly wrought and artistic character. The greater part of these appear to be of post-exilic origin, but some of them are found in the oldest oracles. In the course of time a variety of metrical forms, appropriate to the sentiment to be expressed was developed, over which there has been much learned discussion; but the characteristics of Hebrew prosody, little of which appears in modern translation, do not greatly concern us. Much of the rhythm is in idea rather than form, and in sentences and phrases rather than syllables, and a conspicuous peculiarity is what is called the parallelism of Hebrew verse, the repetition of the idea in different words or the expression of contrasted ideas. This is readily reproduced, but most imitations of the original versification are not reproductions. There was much of the flow, the swing, the roll or murmur, and the ring of poetical language in these passages, and not a little of the effect has been reproduced by skilful translation in English. In

some of the lyrics, even of the most serious kind, there is a good deal of artificiality of structure.

This is especially true of the "Book of Lamentations," which is the oldest of the complete collections in the body of Jewish scripture that are in verse. While it is the oldest it is a question whether any part of it was written until after the exile was over, though a part is believed by some authorities to have been produced in the early days of the "captivity," when the siege and destruction of Jerusalem were fresh in memory. All are agreed that the five separate poems do not belong to the same period and did not emanate from the same author, and that there never was any ground for attributing any part of them to the prophet Jeremiah. Some regard the second and fourth, which are akin and probably from the same hand, as the oldest and as belonging to the early years of the exile, and the first and fifth as considerably later. Others make the fifth the oldest, though placing it after the Persian conquest, but all agree that the third is the latest of all, belonging to the period after the Greek or Macedonian conquest. This is a kind of dispute with which we do not concern ourselves, accepting only general conclusions that affect the proper understanding of what we are considering.

The Hebrew title and the Greek equivalent have the meaning of "dirges," or threnodies, but only the first, second and fourth have that char-

acter. These are what are called alphabetical poems, the successive verses beginning with letters of the Hebrew alphabet in their regular order, twenty-two in number; and there is a kind of uniformity in their rhythmical structure. The first, which is later than the other two, mourns over the solitude and desolation of Jerusalem, personified as the widowed daughter of Zion. The first half is in the words of the poet, but in the second half the bereaved city itself takes up the strain of grief, of confession of guilt and of prayer for vengeance upon her enemies. The second and fourth present terrible pictures of the humiliation of Jerusalem and of the kingdom of Judah, which is treated as the doing of the Lord as a punishment for iniquity. The fourth ends with an imprecation upon Edom, the bitterest enemy of Israel, though a brother nation, and it is declared that while the punishment of the daughter of Zion is accomplished that of Edom is to come.

Chapter five, which is regarded by some authorities as older than these dirges over Jerusalem, but which probably belongs to the time after the return from exile, when there was a sad struggle in the effort to rebuild the city, has a verse for each of the Hebrew letters, but they are not alphabetically arranged. It is in the form of a prayer to the Lord by the people, and contains a pitiful complaint of the forlorn condition in which calamity

has left them, and of their subjection to strangers, with "servants" ruling over them. While there is a fervent plea that the Lord turn them again to himself, it ends with a despairing cry that he has "utterly rejected" them and is still "very wroth" against them. This may have arisen in that troublous time before the coming of Ezra and Nehemiah, or it may have been in a later day of humiliation, of which there were many.

The third chapter of Lamentations is a lament, but not a dirge. The verses are arranged alphabetically in threes. It undoubtedly belongs to a period of depression after the Greek conquest and before the Maccabean uprising, but not in the comparatively comfortable time when Palestine was under the rule of the Ptolemies. It is particularly interesting for the personification of the suffering community as a man who has seen affliction and makes his appeal to the Lord. It is the kind of personification that appears in the "suffering servant" of the Lord in the chapters attached to Isaiah. It is full of confession and submission rather than of complaint, and is a humble plea to the Lord, who has redeemed the life of his people but has still to judge their cause and save them from their enemies. He is asked to curse these enemies, to give them sorrow of heart and destroy them from under heaven, which savours more of vengeance than of assurance of relief.

Contrasted with this in tone and in colour is that cheerful string of lyric gems to which some editor prefixed the title "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's." It was not Solomon's and had no relation to Solomon, and it is believed to have had its origin in the earlier part of the Greek period. It owes its preservation in the Jewish canon possibly to the attribution to Solomon, or that may have been given to it to justify its admission, but only after it had been interpreted as symbolising the love of Israel's God for his people. This far-fetched symbolism was carried farther by the early Christians and made to signify Christ's love for his church. This was at a time when a devout faith would accept almost anything without qualms of reason.

It symbolises nothing, but depicts in glowing terms a purely human love of man and woman, and it has no religious significance whatever; but we are entitled to be grateful to the religious spirit that preserved it as a jewelled ornament to gleam forever upon the great epic of Israel. Since its secular character has been acknowledged much learning has been expended upon it as a fascinating riddle. The failure of ancient scribes to distinguish its divisions and its characters, and the lack of care in copyists who transcribed it in uncertain manuscript, has given much trouble to the learned pundits. First, they tried to make a little musical drama of it, as if it were enacted on a stage, with

King Solomon and a beautiful Shulamite maiden among the characters, in spite of the fact that Hebrew literature had no drama at the time when the greatest of Greek literature was taking that form.

The conclusion reached by the latest and most searching study is that it is a collection of wedding songs or parts thereof, which somebody endeavoured to arrange into a kind of unity, but not with complete success. This theory was sustained by the known fact that in Syria and Palestine in the olden time weddings were celebrated in a manner that happily fits it, with popular processions and with songs and dances for a week, when bride and bridegroom were hailed as a royal pair, or as king and queen. Where the name of Solomon appears it may have been playfully applied to a happily wedded monarch, and Shulamite may have been an epithet derived from memory of that "fairest among women," the Shunamite that was sought out to cherish David in his last days.

The various studies of the charming riddle of the "Song of Songs" are interesting to those interested in that kind of puzzle, but the real attraction in this glittering bit of Hebrew literature is its glowing descriptions of personal beauty and of ardent sentiment in a newly wedded pair. If it seems to border closely upon the sensuous, it is descriptive of a pure love of lovers or of bride and bridegroom, with no more than its genuine

relation to the flesh, of which the ancients were not so chary as the moderns. A feature of the Syrian wedding celebration was a sword dance with which the description of chapter seven may have been associated. Apart from its pictorial merit this little production gives us a glimpse of the lighter and brighter aspect of life in the Jewish days long after the exile, and shows that it was not wholly overshadowed by the priestly law and its observances.

But the great repository of Hebrew lyrics is that volume of poetry, mainly religious or devotional, which has been known as the Book of Psalms ever since it was first rendered into the Greek language, when the tongue of Israel was ceasing to speak in its ancient accents. The word rendered *ψαλμός* in Greek meant a piece sung to a musical accompaniment, but the Hebrew title for the collection meant "Songs of Praise." Just when this collection was completed and divided into five books, like the Torah, or law, cannot be determined, but it is believed to have been in the last half of the Second Century, B. C. The division into books was partly arbitrary, but there were several collections, made at different times and finally combined, to form the psalterium, or psalter, of the temple and the synagogues in the centuries before the Christian era, and to become the priceless heritage of the Christian Church in after times.

The five books evidently do not correspond to the original collections. The first comprises Psalms one to forty-one and is made up mostly of what appears to be the earliest collection. All but the first two pieces, which form a general prelude to the entire volume, and the tenth and thirty-third, are labelled with the name of David. The second book, which extends from forty-two to seventy-two, includes another and probably later collection attributed to David. This latter consists of the series from fifty-one to seventy-one, with the exception of sixty-six, sixty-seven and seventy-one, which are anonymous. Seventy-two is credited to Solomon. Forty-two to forty-nine are inscribed as "for the sons of Korah," and fifty is marked as "a psalm of Asaph."

The third book includes Psalms seventy-three to eighty-nine, and all but the last six are called psalms of Asaph, probably forming a collection by themselves and perhaps originally including number fifty. The last six form a kind of appendix to this collection. Three of them, eighty-four, eighty-five and eighty-seven are "for the sons of Korah," eighty-six is "a prayer of David" and the last two are called "maschils," of Heman the Ezrahite and Ethan the Ezrahite respectively. Book four ends with Psalm one hundred and six and book five covers the rest of the hundred and fifty. There is no distinct division between these two "books," and

the psalms are mostly anonymous, though number ninety is attributed to Moses, and several are credited to David. The two books can hardly be regarded as a separate collection, and they were probably for the most part gradual accretions. It is generally noted that the section from forty-two to eighty-three underwent at some time an Elohist redaction, in which the name Yahweh, rendered in English "the Lord," was changed in most cases to Elohim, God. This doubtless constituted at that time a collection made up of smaller collections of Korahite, Davidic and Asaphite psalms.

There has been much learned controversy over these titles, but there is no reason for regarding them as having any relation to authorship. The psalms were collected, and to a large extent written, for the temple service after the exile. There may be some that were adapted from sporadic songs or hymns of praise which appeared before the exile, but there was no form of worship in which such were used at that time, and there are few, if any, of this kind. It is certain that none came down from Moses, and the evidence is all against any as old as David or Solomon. Some authorities who have given close study to all the internal and external and all historical and linguistic evidence, will not allow that any appeared before the exile which could be regarded as more than crude material for the final product. The use of ancient and revered names upon produc-

tions that were highly cherished was common, especially when their origin was unknown and they were on some account associated with the characters or quality for which the names stood.

The chronicler, as we have seen, attributed the organisation of the temple service, as it was after the exile, to David, and it may have been for that reason that some of the earliest psalms in use were labelled with his name. The musical service was said to have been assigned by him to the sons of Asaph and of Heman and of Jeduthun. This would seem to imply that in the chronicler's time there were three choirs or guilds of temple singers and musicians bearing these titles; but, in the slight references in Ezra and Nehemiah, only one is mentioned, known as the "sons of Asaph," who were singers. The use of the phrase "sons of" was common for members of any organisation or community or class or nation which had a name, whether personal or otherwise.

Asaph was one of the old clan names and may or may not have been borne by a person in the exile, but it was evidently applied to a company of singers then, and in the temple service later. Hence many of the psalms used by this company bear the name of Asaph. That Asaph was used as the name of a person in David's time by the writer of the Chronicles signifies nothing historical. It was the same writer who as compiler of the Book of

Nehemiah spoke of "the days of David and Asaph of old," when there were "chiefs of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving to God." The sons of Korah were evidently a second choir or guild of temple singers when these collections were formed, unknown in the time of Ezra; but the psalms afford no evidence of a third, which might be implied by the chronicler's reference to David's assignment of duties, unless it be in the single psalms attributed to Heman and Ethan. But in Chronicles the sons of Heman appear to be musicians to "lift up the horn."

These titles are matters of little living interest, as they give no clue to the authorship of psalms, the time in which they were written, or to circumstances which might explain their meaning or their allusions. While most of those in the first book are probably older and most of those in the last two books later than the rest, no chronological order is observed, and stray pieces, old and new, were apparently gathered in from time to time wherever they would fit or wherever it happened to be convenient to put them. The lack of classification and arrangement has given large opportunity for learned research and close study by many learned men desirous of telling us all about the origin and meaning of the psalms, and it would take a large volume to sum up their various conclusions and to point out their reasons for not agreeing. We will be satisfied with a few very

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general conclusions and contented with the meaning the psalms have for the modern man.

Though a few may have been old when they were collected together and some may have been expressions of personal experience and feeling, as a whole they reflect the moods and sentiments, the hopes and fears, the aspirations and the devotion, of the Jewish community when it was under the Persian power and later under that of Greece or Syria. Some of them were written and sung after the revolt of Simon the priest, and under the rule of his descendants at Jerusalem, when they were lauded as if they were offspring of the house of David. In fact, they were so considered in some figurative or metaphorical sense. During most of the period in which this anthology was produced the Jews at Jerusalem had little autonomy of worldly rule. They were subject to alien authority which was sometimes oppressive and always hated. They were beset with enemies at times who annoyed and humiliated them. Their ancient pride had been subdued but not extinguished, and they keenly felt their position as subjects of those whose god was not the Lord. Many among them were faithless to their ancient traditions.

Their "sacred nation" was dead and the hope of earthly power seemed to be gone, but the old promises were still cherished and belief in the destiny of Israel's race was invincible. Their God had punished them for their sins, he seemed at

times to have rejected and abandoned them, but they would cling to him as the rock of their salvation and their redeemer in his own good time. It was not the Jewish community as a whole, but the community of the pious and devout, many of them poor, meek and humble, but conscious of superiority over the worldly and the wicked, and proud of their race and their religion compared with those of the mighty nations, which found expression in many of these intense lyrics that have such a marvellous adaptation to individual moods.

Fully to appreciate them we must keep in mind that they are rarely the expression of the personal moods and feelings of the writers, except as they were in full sympathy with the community of the Lord's "Saints." The "I" and "me," so much used, are pronouns of that personified community, which raised its united voice in the temple or the synagogue, or of the race or people of which this was a sanctified part. When beset with enemies and in peril, as it was from time to time in those centuries after the exile, its voice was raised from deep dejection in imprecations and calls for vengeance and in pleas for help. Sometimes it felt that it had been cast off and abandoned, forsaken of its God, who had withdrawn afar off or hidden his face, and it cried out almost in despair. It bewailed the sins of the past and acknowledged that the punishment inflicted upon the nation had

been deserved, but besought the Lord to forgive and to save. It often magnified the power and glory of the Lord and called upon all the earth to utter his praise. When victorious or prosperous it exulted in songs of triumph and praised the Lord for his loving kindness and tender mercy and his ever present help in time of need.

The experience through which the people of Israel had passed wrought a change in the conception of deity. He was no longer the human-like being who walked in the Garden of Eden, and talked with Abraham and Moses; he was not the mightier Chemosh or Baal who fought the battles of his people and destroyed the hosts of other gods; he was not even the fierce and wrathful and jealous potentate of the prophets, and no longer uttered threats and promises. He was remote, unseen and unheard. He was still the embodiment of stern justice, but he had pity upon his people, now anxiously submissive and pleading to be forgiven and to be sustained. He was righteous altogether, but good and merciful to those who humbly called upon him. The voice is that of a people which has been through affliction, which has gone astray and been punished, but is repentant and subdued, and still hopeful that after its purification it will be exalted and made happy. It still trusts in its God, calls upon him in time of trouble, rejoices in him in days of triumph, pleads for his forgiveness and help, utters thanks

for every favour and is deeply devoted to his worship or striving to be so.

The wonderful thing about all these varied utterances that sprang from the devoted community of which the temple at Jerusalem was the centre and the synagogues were scattered branches, is their adaptation to human moods and needs and aspirations in the individual man, which has made of them an anthology of religious devotion and worship for all time. As part of Israel's epic this is a revelation of the experience and the character of the people and a varied reflection of Judaism in its religious aspect, when political power was gone forever, the voice of prophecy was hushed, the oracle and the vision had departed, and even the sacrifices and oblations of the sanctuary seem almost forgotten in the chants of priests and the singing of choirs. Save for one long, artificial and monotonous panegyric, a complex alphabetical acrostic, there is little reference to the "law" and the "statutes" and the "testimonies" of the Lord; and the formal sacrifices and observances are slightly referred to as of little moment compared with a contrite heart, a submissive spirit, upright conduct, and devotion to purity and goodness.

This is what gives the psalms their universal and everlasting sanction, as expressions of the yearnings of the human soul. They were prod-

ucts of the Hebrew genius, which like most that preceded them, owe their peculiar vitality to the fact that they were not creations of individual minds intent upon giving expression to themselves, but emanations from the life and experience of a people, with an intense consciousness of a common lot and a common fate in the midst of an alien world.

XIV.

WISDOM AND PHILOSOPHY

It was long after the exile that the Hebrew genius, under the influence of Persian and Greek philosophy, turned to the production of what have been designated as "wisdom books." The earliest of these in its material, if not in its final form, was a collection of discourses and sayings of the wise, which was admitted later than the beginning of the Christian era to the third canon, or that of "sacred writings," as distinguished from "the Law" and "the Prophets." It is known to us as the Book of Proverbs. Just how early it was finally made up is one of the many questions upon which the most learned differ, but probably in the later part of what is called the Greek period, and before the insurrection led by the "Maccabees." It consists of different components finally thrown together, and labeled in the first versions from the original tongue "The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, King of Israel." The oldest of the subsidiary collections of which it is composed, extending from Chapter ten of the book as we have it to Chapter twenty-two, verse sixteen, is headed "The proverbs of Solomon." This seems to be

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divided at Chapter sixteen, verse three, into two sections of somewhat different character, which were doubtless separate in their earliest form. Again, the five chapters from twenty-five to twenty-nine are introduced with the statement: "These are also the proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, King of Judah copied out."

All of these are detached sayings in rhythmical couplets, seldom connected or arranged with reference to the sequence of ideas. They are maxims, aphorisms and gnomic sayings, which may have been gathered from various sources. Between these two main sections, there are two groups of quatrains, or strophes, from XXII, 17 to XXIV, 22, and XXIV, 23 to 34. The first nine chapters of the book are undoubtedly later, but, being in the form of didactic discourses, were used as an introduction, and the last two chapters constitute an appendix of miscellaneous material.

Notwithstanding all the learned discussion on the subject there is no reason for taking the use of the name of Solomon, as applied either to subordinate sections or to the whole collection, as any evidence of the authorship of any part of the sayings. That king became in a sense legendary, as the model of all wisdom, and it was said, long after his day, that he uttered many wise sayings, but there is no reason to suppose that any of these were preserved until this collection was made up. The use of his name was in accordance with a

common practice at a time when writings, except the oracles of prophets, were rarely associated with the names of the authors. The names used did not indicate authorship but character. Neither is there any reason to suppose that any of these were "copied out" by men of Hezekiah, notwithstanding the statement. His reign was in the troublous time of Assyrian invasion and was closely associated with the activity of the prophet Isaiah; but there is nothing in the account of it to indicate that he had men about him engaged in the peaceful pursuit of collecting or uttering proverbs. But the strongest argument for the late authorship of most, if not all, of these sayings is their character, which is not in keeping with the conceptions or modes of thought of the pre-exilic time.

There was one fundamental conception, upon which the prophets laid constant stress, if they did not originate it, and it was never lost. "The Lord" of Israel was a God of righteousness and justice, the source of all wisdom and power. Fear of him and obedience to his mandates, as uttered by those who truly spoke in his name, was the only safety. All wrong-doing was disobedience and folly and would bring inevitable penalties. The application of this conception to human life and conduct took a different form after the experience of the nation's destruction, the captivity of its people, and their subjection to foreign powers. This appears strikingly in the Book of Proverbs.

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The deity no longer seems to be "the Lord," Yahweh, the god of Israel, and there is no allusion to the existence of other gods. He is not the passionate potentate of the heavens as in the former time, jealous of the worship of other deities, watchful of his own peculiar people, given to wrath at their offences, yet loving them and repenting of his anger when they turned to him in humble submission; punishing them with famine, pestilence and war, and yet hating their enemies and oppressors, threatening their destruction and promising glory and greatness to a purified remnant of his own people. That stage of development had passed with the destruction of the nation and the humiliation of the people, and the God of the "wise men" was remote, unheard and unseen, no longer in intimate association with prophets and priests, seers and dreamers. He is the divine power of the universe, the source of all good and the embodiment of the moral law. His relation is not that of a ruler of the nation or the father of a people, and he is not given to human impulses and emotions. He is a serene deity, whose laws are inexorable and work out their own penalties on the earth, and his relation is to the individual man.

There is reason to believe, though there is no clear evidence, that after the exile there developed schools of wise teachers, as there had been schools of prophets in the olden time in which the disciples were called "sons of prophets." These wise men

also addressed their pupils as "sons." They appear to have led lives of study and meditation, and while they drew their fundamental religious conception from the old prophets, much of their inspiration came from the philosophy of the conquerors of Israel. There is little reference to the law or to sacrifices and none to prayer and praise. Nothing is said of loving God, and of his love it is only said that "whom the Lord loveth he reproveth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." It is wisdom that is said to love those who love her. Virtually no distinction is made between righteousness, or right-doing, and wisdom, or between wickedness and folly. Fear of the Lord is said to be the essence of wisdom, but fear of the Lord is synonymous with obedience to the moral law of which he is the personification.

In this there is a profound philosophy that can never grow old. It is everlastingly true that the highest wisdom lies in doing right. The best man is the wisest and happiest, and wrong-doing, whether as vice and crime or as falsehood and dishonesty, is foolish and injurious to the perpetrator. The basic philosophy of the proverbs is sound, but it pervaded other literature of its time besides that of Judaism. Here and there is a glimpse of a higher ethical principle than that of the law. "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth and let not thine

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heart be glad when he stumbleth." "If thy enemy be hungry give him water to drink."

The introductory nine chapters of Proverbs, which are later in origin, are different in form from the collections that follow. Whether the product of one writer or not, they form a series of connected discourses, and the rhythmical forms are varied. This section is in parts poetical as well as rhythmical, especially in those in which wisdom is personified. The elaborate personification in chapter eight, where wisdom speaks in the first person and makes itself the first offspring of the Lord and his companion in his creative work, contains the germ of the logos doctrine of Philo, wherein was the seed of the "word" dogma of the fourth gospel. The burden of these chapters is the warning of the young against the enticements of the wicked and especially those of the "strange woman," whose feet go down to death and "her steps take hold on sheol." This term for the underworld of Hebrew mythology, where the dead remained in a state of torpor, forever at rest, is a common synonym for death or the grave. Mingled with the magnifying of wisdom and knowledge, the scorn of wickedness and folly and warnings against temptation, are many sage maxims and aphorisms touching the conduct of life. While the versification is more varied than in other parts of the book there is much of the familiar parallelism of idea.

The long section which follows these discourses is made up of couplets occasionally extended to triplets, in which antithetical parallelism is the prevalent form, as "A wise son maketh a glad father, But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother;" "Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, But righteousness delivereth from death," and so on. In the second part of this section, beginning with Chapter XVI, 3, there is a predominance of couplets in which the two members are synonymous, or form a continuous expression, as:

"By mercy and truth iniquity is purged,
And by fear of the Lord men depart from evil."
"Better is a little with righteousness
Than great revenues with injustice."

While in this collection there is still much contrasting of wisdom and folly and of righteousness and wickedness, there is also much of mere worldly good sense and prudent counsel. Still more does this quality appear in the collection of apothegms which the men of Hezekiah are said to have "copied out."

Between these collections, introduced with an admonition to listen to the words of the wise and apply the heart to acquiring knowledge, are two groups of epigrams and wise sayings separated by the line: "These also are sayings of the wise" or "these things also belong to the wise," which may apply to what goes before or what follows,

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as in the original there was no punctuation, and divisions of manuscript were uncertain. These are partly in quatrains and strophes of irregular length, and, while different in manner from the other collection, have much the same tone of high morality and worldly wisdom. It can hardly be said that the world has advanced in that respect in all these centuries beyond the standard of the wise men of Judea, although religious conceptions have reached a greater height, the field of knowledge has vastly widened, the human understanding has more to work upon and to support it, and ethical motives are more exalted among the wisest and best. But the marvel of this book, doubtless the work of many hands extending over a considerable period, is the enduring validity of its wisdom and its constant appeal to the moral sense and the common sense of humanity. The writers used the knowledge, the understanding and the reason of their time to the utmost, and without hope of reward or fear of retribution in another life, reached the sound conclusion that in this life, "here on this bank and shoal of time," righteousness and truth, justice and mercy, are the part of wisdom and safety.

The two supplementary chapters of the book have a merit of their own, but no literary relation to the rest. Who Agur was, whether the name was meant for a real person or was a proper name at all, it is hardly worth while to consider. It

is even uncertain how much of what follows the enigmatical reference to the words of "Agur the Son of Jakeh," addressed unto Ithiel and Ucal, was meant to be attributed to that person, whether real or imaginary. It makes no difference with the merit of what is said, some of which is wise and some only curious. Equally doubtful is the personality of King Lemuel and his mother, and equally unimportant. Many will venture to disagree with "the words" regarding the use of strong drink. But there is no connection between the stray words of Agur and Lemuel and the alphabetical poem with which the book closes in praise of the virtuous woman. That is one of the gems of ancient literature gathered up in this great repository of Israel's manifold genius.

Another treasure that might have been lost to mankind but for the old Jewish pride that imposed the seal of sanctity upon the books which it held precious and imposed its acceptance upon many generations, is that known as "Ecclesiastes." It was late in being admitted to the canon by which the seal of sanctity was affixed and probably owes its escape from the "apocrypha" to the assumption that it was a work of Solomon and to the appended words which summed up the "conclusion of the whole matter." The title, "The words of Koheleth, the son of David, King in Jerusalem," was not prefixed by the author. The exact meaning of Koheleth, rendered "Ecclesi-

astes " in the Greek and the " preacher " in English, is a little dubious, but the writer used it to represent the speaker in the monologue which follows.

He introduces his discourse with a gloomy prologue upon the vanity and emptiness of all things in this world, because life is one monotonous round and there is nothing new to be looked for and no remembrance of things from one generation to another. Then for the purpose of illustration he assumes the greatest character he can conceive of, " King over Israel in Jerusalem," in order to say that all that he was and all that he achieved, his test of wisdom and wealth and of pleasure and enjoyment, only led to the conclusion that all is vanity and striving after the wind, and that nothing is better for man than that he should eat and drink and make his soul enjoy good in his labour. He does not use the name of Solomon or assume to be the son of David, though doubtless he had that exemplar in mind. When the character had served his purpose he dropped the mask.

Ecclesiastes was one of the latest productions added to their sacred canon by the Jews. Some have regarded it as the latest to be produced, but it was doubtless earlier than the Book of Daniel. Like the latest of the proverbs it was written when Israel's hope of ever again being an independent nation was at the lowest and its submission to a

foreign power was most complete. That power was probably the Syrian princes who had come in after the conquests of Alexander, and when the process of Hellenisation had pervaded Palestine. "Koheleth" carried farther than any of the more cheerful wise men who had a hand in the contents of the Book of Proverbs the doctrine that no matter what you may think of this life and the destiny of man, there is nothing better for you than wisdom and understanding, and what they dictate is righteous conduct in "fear of the Lord," even though the righteous may sometimes suffer and the wicked may flourish, while the same fate awaits them both, which is the fate of the beasts that perish. Of that he has no doubt and yet he would make the best of life while it lasts. Notwithstanding "the travail which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith," "I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to get good so long as they live; and also that every man should eat, and drink and enjoy good in all his labour; it is the gift of God."

The work is not altogether coherent or entirely consistent, which may be in part due to imperfections in transcribing and to emendations and interpolations by copyists. Most of these ancient texts are corrupt beyond the power of man to restore to their pristine form. But the writer had varying moods and he introduced maxims and wise

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sayings some of which may not have been his own. Still, his doctrine is not obscure. He regarded everything in this world, good and bad, as ordained of God and unchangeable by man. It was inscrutable and it was vain to contend against it. It could not be reformed and it did not tend to cure itself. There were oppressions under the sun and its victims had no comforter. It were better for them to be dead than living and best of all never to have lived, and yet he says elsewhere that where there is life there is hope and a living dog is better than a dead lion.

He has seen one born poor come out of prison to be a king and be acclaimed by all, but those who come after will not rejoice in him, and that also is vanity. One man heaps up riches and may rejoice in the fruits of his labour. It is the gift of God. Another may have riches and honour and be unable to enjoy them, and an untimely birth is better than he. A wise man seems to have no advantage over a fool. A righteous man perishes in his righteousness and a wicked man prolongeth his life in evil doing; and it seems better not to be righteous overmuch or to be overwise. All the striving is not worth while. It comes to nothing. There is one event to all and there is no help for it. Hence, again, eat thy bread with joy and drink thy wine with a merry heart, and live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest. Do what thy hand finds to do with thy might, though

the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong. The wise get no reward. A poor wise man may save a besieged city and be immediately forgotten. It is all a matter of inexorable fate or the will of God which cannot be fathomed.

And yet through these gloomy and vacillating musings runs a philosophy of cheerful acceptance of what is ordained because it is of God. There is the refrain that, after all, wisdom is better than folly and righteousness is more to be desired than wickedness. There is no memory of the dead, no reward or retribution beyond the grave, no discriminating justice in this life, and yet "surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God," and "it shall not be well with the wicked." With the tinge of melancholy meditation, lighted with an occasional gleam of cheerful resignation, it is the philosophy of the proverbs, that in this life with all its vicissitudes and iniquities, righteousness and obedience to the moral law is wisdom, which is the most precious possession. Wrongdoing is folly and brings its own reward. That was the doctrine of Hebrew faith, whether for the nation or the individual, the product of invincible belief in a just God, itself the fruit of a moral insight that has never been excelled.

The poetical picture of old age with which the original book closes is a contrast to impress the preceding advice to youth to enjoy the blessings of life while they last, and learned authorities re-

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gard "remember thy Creator" as the pious interpolation of an editor, who after the final "vanity of vanities, all is vanity," also attributed to Koheleth, or the preacher, in the third person, many proverbs and the conclusion that the whole duty of man is to fear God and keep his commandments. It is such interjections and additions that turned the sceptical philosopher into a sacred writer after he had gone.

XV

THE BOOK OF JOB

THE poetical genius of the ancient Hebrews reached its loftiest expression after the exile in the Book of Job, which is not properly one of the "wisdom books," though commonly classed as such. It is a unique production and deserves to stand alone, but it is not without a close relation to the rest of the great epic, which pictures the moral and religious development of the people of Israel. Like so much else within the broad lines of that grand production, it is a composite work, and no name of those who had a hand in making it was preserved in memory to be transmitted to later generations, so careless was the Hebrew genius of individual authorship, so careful of the substance which it held sacred.

It has been difficult even for the most learned of modern scholars who treat this literature as a production of human minds, like that of other ancient peoples, to emancipate themselves wholly from this prepossession of peculiar sanctity and treat it with entire freedom. They are apt to regard the Book of Job, if entirely human, as the greatest of all productions of the human mind,

as virtually faultless; but this is an extravagant claim. It contains subtle delineations and some powerful descriptions, but it does not reach the profound depths of philosophy touching human life that were sounded in Greek tragedy of nearly or quite the same period, and does not excel in power of description, splendour of imagery or force of expression, the greatest passages of Greek poetry. Its chief value lies in its reflection of a state of mind in the Jewish world when it was passing through a transition from ancient conceptions to a broader view, under the influence of thought derived from Persian and Greek sources. It has been maintained by some that it was not originally a Hebrew production, but in the form which it finally took it was distinctly Israelite and deeply imbued with Jewish thought akin to that of the Proverbs and of Ecclesiastes, in revolt against the fundamental doctrine of the prophets and the priests.

What may be called the fundamental doctrine of ancient Judaism, derived from a conception of deity that underwent a progressive development with the growth and the experience of Israel, was that righteous conduct, obedience to the commands of the God Yahweh through his chosen and inspired spokesmen, was rewarded with success and prosperity on the earth, and that disobedience was punished with calamity and suffering. In the days of Israel's historic struggles this was

applied to the nation and its rulers, and to the people as a whole, rather than to the individual. The prophets taught that if the kingdom was ruled in righteousness and its subjects were loyally devoted to the worship of their God and obedient to his law, he would protect them from their enemies, fight their battles and destroy those who assailed them; but if they failed in this kind of loyalty he would punish them with defeat, and even allow their powerful enemies to destroy all but a purified remnant, which he would restore and establish in accordance with his bargain with their great progenitor, his friend on the earth, Abraham.

Those who wrought the annals of the past from ancient songs and legends and from drifting records of tradition, shaped their account of events and facts to conform to this doctrine. They found that every period of prosperity was due to the favour of Israel's God on account of the virtue of its rulers and the fidelity of the people, and every calamity was caused by neglect of his worship and failure to observe his commands. When the two kingdoms one after the other were menaced by the great powers of the East, the pleadings of the prophets were against any dependence upon arms or alliance with other nations, great or small, and for absolute reliance upon Yahweh's might and Yahweh's care. When destruction came and the people were scattered or carried into captivity,

it was devoutly believed that this was a fulfilment of warnings that had been unheeded, and the only hope was in repentance and humble submission. Then the Lord's mercy would be awakened, his love would be renewed and he would restore his people and build up his kingdom under an ideal ruler of his own choosing from the revered "house of David," even though David's family may seem to have disappeared, root and branch.

As promise after promise failed of fulfilment and the nation was in hopeless subjection to foreign rulers, first under the Persian power and then that of Greece, the ancient doctrine took a new form. There seemed to be no hope for the nation, and the ideal kingdom was a dream of the indefinite future, but the God of Israel was righteous altogether and incapable of anything but justice. His worshippers must now be considered as individuals, and as such they were under his care, as the nation had been. If they did right they would prosper and be rewarded with health, long life and happy families. If they did wrong, they would be punished with sickness, destitution and suffering. That was why wisdom was synonymous with righteousness and folly with wickedness. History seemed to have failed to sustain this doctrine in the experience of the nation, but that may have been because the nation failed to live up to it. But it seemed to be belied by daily experience and observation as applied to individuals, and

scepticism arose as to its validity. There was a struggle with doubts of the justice of God; and not all could reconcile themselves with the sad philosophy of cheerful acquiescence proclaimed by him who spoke as "Koheleth." In the Book of Job the mental struggle with this problem of the suffering of the righteous and the justice of God is vividly set forth, but the problem is left unsolved.

We have said the book is a composite production. We shall not weary the reader with any reference to the vast volume of controversy over its analysis, but accept what seem to be the most valid conclusions, and only seek to see clearly just what the work is in the light of what has been learned of its origin and its bearings. It is the substance that interests us. The "story" is contained in the brief prologue and epilogue in prose, and this is believed to be older than the colloquies in verse between Job and his friends and the final speeches attributed to Yahweh, the Lord, the original material in the body of the work having been displaced by later writers without any attempt to adapt the framework of story to the change in its content.

The original is believed to have been written early in the Persian period. The conception of Satan, as the "adversary" and as a kind of agent of the Almighty, could not have been earlier. The only other appearance of the character in

this literature is in the prophecy of Zechariah, though the Chronicler used it as the instigator of the offence of David which was supposed to have brought a pestilence upon his kingdom. The mythical quality of the prologue in the introduction of the "Sons of God," or minor deities, is not wholly inconsistent with the more ancient theology of the Hebrews, and it may have been borrowed from it for the occasion, to give an antique aspect to the story. The epilogue has a similar mythical quality in making "the Lord" directly address Eliphaz the Temanite in anger and charge him and his two friends with not speaking of him "the thing that is right," as his servant Job had done. This reference to what had been spoken of him is quite inconsistent with the actual speeches that were interposed in their final form between the prologue and the epilogue.

The original story is believed by some learned critics to have made the suffering Job a personification or type of the people of Israel, as in the case of the suffering servant in the fifty-second and fifty-third chapters of the Book of Isaiah, and to have regarded the restoration of his prosperity and high estate of honour as symbolical of a fulfilment of the promise of final recompense for the nation's past sufferings. This also does not appear to be consistent with the purport of the poetical controversies as they stand. That some such analogy may have been in the mind of the

poet of the earlier colloquies is apparent in some of Job's complaints of his own sufferings, as in chapters nine and sixteen, where they are almost as impersonal as in the case of the "suffering servant." The contention that the story may have had a legendary basis does not seem reasonable, in view of the utter unreality of the circumstances described. The name Job appears for some reason to be among those revered in the past, as it is used in Ezekiel, with Noah and Daniel, as representative of a type of the righteous, but that does not necessarily imply a real person in history.

The problem to which the poetry of this book is devoted is to be traced in the speeches of Job and of the three friends, who are said in the introductory story to have come by appointment between themselves from different quarters "to mourn with him and to comfort him." There does not appear in their utterances in their present form much mourning in his behalf or much comforting. There is far more of reproach. Almost invariably the speeches, which begin in a personal way, soon lapse into the speaker's general view of the experience of the righteous or the wicked, or of the supernal wisdom and justice of God, and the individual case is lost sight of.

The first speech put in the mouth of the character that is set up as a model of the righteous man in extreme and undeserved affliction, is a prolonged and reiterated curse upon the day in which

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he was born and a wish that he had perished at birth and been left in the underworld of the dead, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. Why should he have to live unwillingly in a world of misery? The first speech of Eliphaz is in a tone of commiseration and does not suggest that Job is suffering for sin, but that his fidelity is under trial, and he is reminded that the righteous are never cut off. The question had come to him in visions of the night, "Shall mortal man be more just than God?" He sets forth the penalties that befall the wicked and the foolish, and declares that the righteous man who is chastened will be delivered from all perils and come to his grave in peace and in ripe old age, leaving his offspring in a flourishing state.

This no doubt was meant to be comforting, but Job finds nothing in it to assuage his grief, so overwhelming and little appreciated is his calamitous condition. Upon this he dwells with every variation of despairing utterance, seems to upbraid his maker for bringing him into the world to torment him, and pleads that he take away his life and leave him to sleep in the dust. He acknowledges the greatness of God and the insignificance of man, and gives that as a reason why it is not worth while for the creator to subject his creature to such trials. While excuse is made for the bitterness of his words, there seems to be little

that is directly personal in this or that is really addressed to auditors.

Bildad is less considerate than Eliphaz and rebukes Job for implying that God is not just, and declares that if he were pure and upright he would only have to make his supplication to the Almighty and the habitation of his righteousness would be made prosperous. He appeals to the traditional doctrine of the fathers that those who forget God shall come to grief and the lips of the perfect man will be filled with rejoicing. Job admits that "this is so of a truth," but pleads his helplessness in conflict with such a mighty being, whom he would not answer though he were perfect, but to whom he would address his supplication as to a judge, if he would deign to hear him. Here we have the poet, rather than the hero of the story, descanting upon the helplessness of suffering humanity, with a touch of the philosophy of Koheleth, that no distinction is made between the righteous and the wicked in their treatment in this life. But he makes his embodiment of the suffering righteous plead pitifully that God knows he is not wicked, that God is responsible for his existence and yet heaps suffering upon him and will not allow him a little comfort before he goes to the land of darkness whence there is no return.

This gives Zophar, the third of the mourners and comforters, the youngest and most confident

in his orthodoxy, an opportunity for the sternest rebuke of this questioner of God's justice, who dares maintain his own purity in the face of what can only be a punishment for some hidden wrongdoing. His words are a variation upon the familiar theme, the unsearchable wisdom and justice of God and the certainty that one has only to put away wickedness to be without fear. To this Job makes a scornful reply and then proceeds himself to magnify the greatness and wisdom of God, which he never questions. He understands all this as well as these presumptuous friends, who assume to speak for God and to contend in his person. He will face God himself. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him; but I will mention mine own ways before him."

There is throughout this, as in other similar writings, a frequent turning from a reference to the deity in the third person to a direct address to him in the second person, and Job is made to challenge God for a fair hearing on his case. He asks to know what his offence is and why he is treated in this manner. He pleads on his own behalf the weakness and insignificance of man, who is of few days and full of trouble, who must soon lie down and sleep never to awake, and yet before his change come he would have an appointed time for the vindication of his character. But his transgression is "sealed up in a bag" and he is not permitted to know what it is.

This desperate appeal brings severe rebuke from Eliphaz for the presumption of one who would make such a claim to righteousness and turn his spirit against God. No living man is entitled to such a claim, and God's standard is so exalted that he puts no trust in his own "holy ones." Man is at best "abominable and filthy." Then the poet portrays again, as told by wise men from their fathers, the consequences which invariably pursue the footsteps of the wicked. All this the impatient victim of reproach has heard before and needs not to be told, and after expressing his resentment at such "miserable comforters" and telling them that if they were in his case he would endeavour to strengthen them and assuage their grief, he renews his complaint with increased vehemence because God has made himself his enemy, delivered him to the ungodly and turned him over to the wicked.

Here the poet in the bitterness of the complaint and the violence of the language seems to lose sight of the personal case and to plead the cause of the community of the pious who are persecuted. It is a case of that vivid personification which was the chief characteristic of the imaginative writing of the ancient Hebrews, and then he makes Job plead again for a hearing with God, "as a man pleadeth with his neighbour." Again he magnifies his suffering and cries out in despair that his

hope will go down to the grave with him and they will rest together in the dust.

Then Bildad sets out with an impatient rebuke at such an exhibition of impious anger, but falls at once into a further reiteration of the fate of the wicked, as if Job's experience were a case in point, which it obviously is not. This shows how impersonal on the whole these poetical discourses are, the afflictions of an imaginary character being used merely as the occasion for their general application.

The culmination of the great controversy really comes in Job's answer to these reproaches in chapter nineteen, and the learned critics are quite generally agreed that what follows for several chapters is from a different hand and much marred by disarrangement and interpolation. But in this chapter nineteen is concentrated anew and in tense language Job's complaint at the infliction of such suffering by the Almighty, although he has done nothing to deserve it. He cries out in anguish. "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God has touched me." But he still not only protests his innocence but his faith that his vindication will come even in his death. There has been much corruption of the original text and perversion of the real meaning of this declaration of faith. There is not in all this sublime controversy a gleam of relief coming from a possible

retribution in another life, for the Hebrew mind was not open to a belief in that until later. If it had been accepted, this book would have been without reason. What Job is made to say is that even if satisfaction is denied him until his flesh is destroyed, yet before departing to the realm of darkness he will be permitted to see God as his vindicator and have assurance that his life has really been upright. In this the writer probably had in mind that analogy which haunted poet and prophet in his day, between the suffering righteous man and the afflicted people whose life as an organised community was continually harried and menaced.

In glancing over the next nine chapters we will accept the conclusions of the learned that they make a breach in the composition of the author of the preceding colloquies, and displace their original continuation, if there was one. Perhaps there was not, and it may be that chapters twenty-nine, thirty and thirty-one were the real sequel to chapter nineteen. At all events there is a difference of tone and style revealed in the intervening discourses. That of Zophar is another variation upon the theme of the inevitable penalties of wickedness, and has no pertinency to what precedes it and no real pertinency to Job's case at all. That of Job which follows descants upon the seeming prosperity of the wicked and defers the penalty of their sins to their children. The three

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verses 16-18, which break in with a contradiction, are believed to be an interpolation of some writer who disapproved of the doctrine of visiting the iniquity of fathers upon the children. The third speech of Eliphaz is hardly more pertinent than the second of Zophar and treats of the greatness and sure justice of God in a general way, as if there were no Job in the case. The proverbial philosophy of the last ten verses of chapter twenty-two are regarded as a later addition. The next speech put in the mouth of Job is a weaker repetition of his demand for a chance to plead his cause, but it does not include chapter twenty-four, which, with the exception of the last verse, is made up of a series of irrelevant passages loosely strung together and interpolated here.

If there was a third speech of Bildad, it was replaced in chapters twenty-five and twenty-six by a poem on the greatness and power of God which has no relation to the genuine colloquies. Only the first four verses of the second of these two chapters belong to the person of Job and their continuation is in the first six verses and verse 12 of the next chapter. The rest of the latter is regarded by a leading critical authority on this book as parts of a lost speech of Zophar. Of one thing there can be no doubt. Chapter twenty-eight is no part of the speech of Job, but is an independent poem, probably of later origin, on the power of man to hunt out the treasures of the

earth, and his inability to find the dwelling place of wisdom, for God alone "understandeth the way thereof and he knoweth the place thereof." Of the magnificence of the poetry there is no question, and in the description of wisdom there is a reminder of its personification in the eighth chapter of Proverbs.

But there is genuine Job again in the three chapters interposed between this and the interpolated discourses imputed to Elihu, and these are apparently from the same hand as the colloquies of chapters three to nineteen, though the passage is somewhat marred by interpolations, the most noticeable of which consists of verses 2 to 8 of chapter thirty, which are of a similar character to those of chapter twenty-four. In the first of these three chapters Job is made plaintively to recall the days of his prosperity and high repute, and in the second to contrast his present condition of suffering and humiliation. In the third he again protests his freedom from iniquity and invokes the most searching scrutiny. Some authorities consider the verses as misplaced in which Job boldly expresses the wish that the Almighty would answer his plea, but though they break in abruptly between verses 34 and 38 of chapter thirty-one, they serve the purpose of preparing the way for the answer of the Almighty which would follow here but for the interruption of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram.

Elihu was a late comer, but his intrusion was tolerated in the final editing of the book and the putting upon it of the seal of sanctity in the Jewish canon. He was not one of the friends who came to mourn with Job and to comfort him. He was unknown to the original story, and the characters in it, who are so boldly faced, pay no heed to his words, and he is not referred to in the epilogue. Evidently the author of his speeches had the original colloquies in his hands, and found the opportunity of adding to them, of which he took advantage because he was not satisfied with the way Job had been answered. Therefore he undertook the task himself. He makes his spokesman admit that he is young, but he claims to have a special inspiration from the Almighty.

With much prolixity and assumption of superior wisdom he derides the older men for the feebleness of their answers and condemns Job for his presumption and for adding rebellion to the iniquity which had brought calamity upon him by maintaining his own innocence and charging God with injustice. Having acquitted himself of this duty, he informs them that God is always gracious and will deliver those who give up their wickedness and appeal to him. Iniquity is no injury to him and righteousness is no profit to him, but his eyes are on the ways of men and they cannot escape him. He strikes the wicked and

humbles the proud and cares for the poor and the afflicted. He chastises the offender to reclaim him, and never fails to recompense all men according to their deeds. Elihu enlarges upon this theme and ends with magnifying the greatness and power of God in the familiar strain and with considerable poetical skill.

But there is really little added to the argument in support of the orthodox doctrine. It would appear that the writer of this passage did not have the closing speech attributed to "the Lord," or he would hardly have presumed to describe his attributes in so much weaker language than that which came from his own mouth; and he could hardly have been familiar with the epilogue, in which the Lord is said to have condemned Eliphaz and his two friends and commended Job for speaking the thing that was right. If he knew of it he treated it as part of a fable which he was under no obligation to heed.

It is Yahweh, "the Lord," who is said to have answered Job out of the whirlwind, as it is Yahweh that figures in the story contained in the prologue; but in the poems, including the final speech, that term is nowhere used and the word translated "God" is usually Shaddai, Elohim, or Adonai, several Semitic expressions for the deity. This speech is the grandest example of Hebrew poetry that was preserved to us, and probably the grandest ever produced; and the author could hardly

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have been the writer of any other part of the book, unless it be the descriptive poem that constitutes chapter twenty-eight of the book. He finds God in the whirlwind, and not, like Elijah, in the "still small voice," and he makes of him the lordly potentate of the heavens, the mighty power that has created the universe and knows all its secrets and in whose presence his creature man sinks into insignificance and has no right to question his decrees.

This is magnificent but it is not argument or reasoning, and it proves nothing. The man who "darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge" is overwhelmed with a torrent of splendid description of the powers of God and the grandeur of his work, and a grandiose exaltation of his might and his wisdom, and he is interrogated as to his right to question the doings of the Almighty, in a manner to make him slink into humiliation, acknowledge his vileness and lay his hand upon his mouth and declare that he would proceed no further. Of the descriptions those of the ostrich and of Behemoth and Leviathan are regarded by the most competent critics of the original production as later interpolations. They certainly have little pertinency to the subject, except to add to the list of creatures of God that man cannot control. Behemoth and Leviathan are commonly regarded as meant for the hippopotamus and crocodile of Egypt, but as applied to

them the descriptions would be grossly hyperbolic. The writer doubtless had them in mind, but he must also have had vaguely working in his thoughts certain monsters of old mythology, one of which was regarded as the master beast of the land and the other of the sea. With that conception the writer mingled his notion of the hippopotamus and the crocodile to make a powerful description. The names used had no application to real animals.

This blast of language, imagined as proceeding from the Almighty in the whirlwind, was enough to silence Job and make him abhor himself; and, according to modern versions of a corrupt text, to "repent in dust and ashes." And yet it must be said that Job's complaint was not answered. There was nothing in the whirlwind to convince him that he was wrong or to justify his treatment, as a man whose righteousness was not questioned by his judge. It was simply the utterance of a mighty potentate who tolerated no questioning of his authority or his will, and deigned no explanation or justification of his action.

This is said, of course, as holding this to be no specially divine utterance but the expression of a human mind that had no solution of the problem of the inscrutable treatment of mankind by a righteous and merciful God. No solution to the problem appears in this great dramatic poem and none was really at-

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tempted. None was possible so long as man's view of his destiny and of retribution or compensation was confined to his life on earth. The Book of Job, apart from its great literary merit, is of special interest as reflecting the state of the Hebrew mind, after the hope of national greatness had departed and religious faith had to apply to the conduct and the fate of individual men, and before it had accepted belief in a continued existence beyond the grave.

XVI

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

WHILE it took a long and learned controversy to settle the time and place and the real character of the production called the "Book of Daniel," nothing has been more clearly established than the fact that it is one of the latest, if not the very latest, of the writings included in the scriptures which the Jews held sacred. There is no other the date of which is so surely determined. It was certainly written in the distressful period of the oppression of the Jews by Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), the Syrian monarch and their sovereign, who strove to extinguish the cult of Judaism in his dominion and replace it with that of Greece. It was after the altar of burnt offering had been desecrated with sacrifices to Zeus Olympius, whose image was erected in the temple, the incident characterised as the "abomination that maketh desolate," and before the insurrection started by the father of the "Maccabees" had led to the restoration of the Jewish worship. The year 165, B. C., is reasonably calculated as the time of the appearance of the book, the purpose of which was not to recount or record or to predict history, but

to stimulate the faith, to encourage the resistance and sustain the hopes of the struggling people.

This is not one of the prophetic books, and it was not originally admitted to the second Canon, the *Nebiim*, or Prophets, but to the third, or *Haggada* (holy writings). Its subsequent transfer and classification among the works of the "Greater prophets," was due to the false notion that it was the production of a prophet named Daniel, who foresaw and prefigured future events. There is no evidence of a prophet of that name in the history of Israel, but it appears to have been a revered name, as it is used by Ezekiel, with those of Noah and Job, as a type of the righteous of the past, unless, indeed, as some scholars have contended, the name in "Ezekiel" should be Enoch. At all events, the name is used in this book, not because Daniel was the author of it or the character bearing the name was a real person, but because it was a revered name or appropriate for its significance.

That the book is in no sense historical in its reference to events or its portrayal of the time to which it purports to relate is sufficiently evident from the character of the contents; but the author displays an imperfect knowledge of the past history which he attempts to project upon the screen as future, from the standing place of his hero, and he shows a complete unconcern about historical accuracy. He starts off with a statement

that Nebuchadrezzar, King of Babylon, besieged Jerusalem in the third year of King Jehoiakim of Judah, and carried away a part of the vessels of the house of God and some captives, "of the king's seed, and of the princes," and young men who were to be of service in his palace, "well-favoured and skilful in all knowledge, and cunning in knowledge and understanding science." This was to prepare the way for stories of certain of these captives and for the use of the temple vessels at Belshazzar's feast; but, as a matter of fact, there was no siege and capture at Jerusalem in the reign of Jehoiakim, and the third year of that reign came before the accession of Nebuchadrezzar to the throne of Babylon.

But the purpose was to make heroes of Daniel and three other of these imaginary captives in stories illustrating the superior character and ability of the Jews and the care which their God exercised over them among the powerful heathen and would exercise over his devout worshippers in their trials at all times and in all places. The impression made upon the King of Babylon by these young Jews, the manner in which he trusted and promoted them to high places, and the way in which the power of their God was displayed and acknowledged by the greatest potentate of the time, reminds the attentive reader of the exaltation of Esther and Mordecai and the favour shown the Jews at a later time by the great

monarch of the Persian empire. The stories are in one case as imaginative and just as credible as in the other, but in both they have a purpose which was not that of historical record.

Daniel and his three companions at the luxurious court of Babylon, at the height of the power of Nebuchadrezzar, are made the special care of the God of Israel, who gave them their goodly favour upon a diet of pulse and water, and their remarkable knowledge and skill. The first display of what in those days was regarded as the height of all wisdom, the power to recover and interpret the king's vanished dream, has a direct bearing upon the revealing purpose of the book, which is developed in the last half in apocalyptic visions. Here one of the many historical errors of the book appears, first in using the term "Chaldeans" as synonymous with magi at Babylon in the time of its kings, whereas it was only so used by the Greeks and Romans at a much later time; and then in assuming that the Syriac or Aramaic tongue of the writer's own time and country was the language of the Chaldeans. Having started by putting that language in the mouth of the "Chaldeans," the writer kept up its use through the subsequent narratives and the first of the visions, after which he reverts to the Hebrew of the introductory chapter. This has led to much controversy over a diversity of material and a difference of authorship in the book. Such there

may have been, but it has a unity of character and consistency of purpose which indicate that in its final form it was the work of a single mind.

The interpretation of the king's dream itself involves a historical error which appears again in the visions. It assumes four successive kingdoms or sovereignties before the time of the Seleucidæ, those of Babylon, Media, Persia and Greece, the first symbolised in the head of gold, the second in the breast and arms of silver, the third in the belly and thighs of brass, and the fourth in the legs of iron, which terminated in the incohesive feet of iron and clay, representing the Seleucids of Syria and the Ptolemies of Egypt. There never was any rule of the Medes at Babylon or over Syria, for Cyrus, the Persian who overthrew the Babylonian power, had merged Media in his own empire ten years before. What the dream is made to foreshadow is the destruction of all these successive kingdoms with "the stone cut out without hands," which was to become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. This prefigures the triumph of Israel and the setting up of a kingdom by "the God of heaven," which should never be destroyed, but should break in pieces and consume all these other kingdoms and itself stand forever.

Though this dream and its interpretation had such an effect upon the great king of Babylon that he fell upon his face and worshipped Daniel and acknowledged his God as a "God of Gods and a

lord of kings," it did not prevent him, according to the next story, from setting up an image of gold more than a hundred feet high and eleven feet wide and requiring everybody to fall down and worship it on pain of being cast into a "burning fiery furnace." It would be a sufficiently unlikely thing for a great king to do, but it served the purpose of exhibiting in a striking fashion the care of Israel's God over his own worshippers who had the courage and fidelity to refuse to fall down before a golden image at the command of the greatest of earthly rulers. It also had the effect of making Nebuchadrezzar again acknowledge the God of the Israelites and make an extraordinary decree that anybody who "spake anything amiss" against him should be cut in pieces.

But even this was not sufficient. The proud king had to be humiliated by being degraded to the condition of a brute for seven years, by way of finally convincing him of the power and everlasting dominion of the "most high" and inducing him to "praise and extol and honour the king of heaven, all whose works are truth and his ways judgment; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." It need hardly be said that there was no historical basis for this alleged episode in the life of Nebuchadrezzar. All the solemn discussion upon that subject and upon a malady, such as he is said to have been smitten with, having the imposing name of lycanthropy, is simply gro-

tesque. The account of the imaginary episode begins and ends in the form of a proclamation by the king himself, but in a most incongruous manner it shifts from a decree into the narrative of a dream and of the interpretation of the dream by Daniel, and a description in the third person of the king's degradation. This can hardly be called skilful, but, in a time when such things were easily accepted and believed in any form, it served its purpose of impressing those for whom it was intended with faith that the God of Israel could and would humble the most powerful of kings and destroy the greatest nations in order to rescue his people.

The tale of Belshazzar's feast and the writing on the wall was intended to account for the destruction of Belshazzar's kingdom and the succession of the supposed empire of the Medes, the immediate occasion being the desecration of the precious vessels of the temple as drinking cups for the king's revellers and concubines. It does not greatly matter that Nebuchadrezzar had no son by the name of Belshazzar, that no son of his succeeded him on the throne, that Belshazzar the son of Nabonidus, his real successor, was never king, that when Babylon finally fell it was at the hand of Cyrus the Persian and not Darius the Mede, and that no such monarch as Darius the Mede is known to history. This story is not history, and its author was far from caring about

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historical accuracy. He was still making Daniel the medium of a wisdom higher than man's in deciphering the cryptic inscription of the phantom hand and announcing the doom of the kingdom; and even Belshazzar is made to heap honour upon him for that dubious service, in return for which he was slain that night and "Darius the Mede took the kingdom, being about three score and two years old." This latter detail gave an extra touch of realism to an imaginary person.

It was this imaginary Median king of Babylon, with the familiar name of a Persian of a later time, who set a hundred and twenty princes and three presidents over his vast kingdom and placed Daniel at the head of them all, as Pharaoh placed Joseph over all Egypt and as Ahasuerus raised Mordecai to the most exalted place in the Persian empire, to the everlasting glory of the Jew and his race. Having done this he was induced by the jealous presidents and princes to make a foolish decree, which was to be as unchangeable as the laws of the Medes and Persians, that anyone who should "ask a petition of any man or God for thirty days," except himself, should be cast into the den of lions. We all know that story and its result, and again the greatest potentate on earth is made to acknowledge the "living God," whose dominion was to be "unto the end," and to address a decree to "all people, nations and languages that dwell in all the earth," commanding

them to "tremble and fear before the God of Daniel." "So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus." The first real Darius who reigned in that kingdom was the successor of Cambyses the son of Cyrus, and came to the throne more than a hundred and eighty years after that mythical siege of Jerusalem which resulted in carrying Daniel and his companions to Babylon.

After these tales for the glorification of Israel's God and the encouragement of his people in their dire struggle against the Syrian oppressor Antiochus Epiphanes (the illustrious), we have the first of the apocalyptic visions attributed to Daniel. It occurred in the first year of the mythical king Belshazzar. After the statement that Daniel had "a dream and visions of his head upon his bed," and that he wrote it down and "told the sum of the matters," the account proceeds in the first person as the spoken words of the dreamer. The four beasts grotesquely described as coming up out of the sea represent, like the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the four kingdoms which had successively ruled Babylon and its subject nations, the second, or that of the Medes, having really never existed. The fourth beast with his terrible teeth of iron and his trampling upon the nations is Alexander of Macedon, whose eastern conquests were divided up after his death. There is nothing exact about the number ten of the horns which

represent the kings that followed, or the three that were plucked up by the little horn with eyes and a mouth, but there is no doubt that this little horn, which spake great things and prevailed against the saints, was meant for Antiochus. The purpose of the vision is to prefigure the God of Israel as the "Ancient of days" coming to judgment, with one "like the son of man" appearing in the clouds of heaven to receive the dominion that was to be taken away from the beasts. Like the stone that was cut out without hands to destroy the image of Nebuchadrezzar's dream and to fill the whole earth, this foreshadowed the rule of God's people, which was to extend under the whole heaven and be an everlasting kingdom.

Two years later, or in the third year of Belshazzar, there was another vision of like significance. Though Belshazzar has been described as a Babylonian, preceding the conquest attributed to Darius the Mede, this is said to have taken place in "Shushan the palace," a phrase in the story of Esther for the dwelling place of the Persian king Ahasuerus, or Xerxes. "Shushan" was in fact, the equivalent of Susa, the capital of Persia in the time of Cyrus and his successors. The ram with two horns is the Medo-Persian empire, which never existed, but of which the Persian horn outgrew the other; and the formidable he-goat is the Macedonian conqueror again. Again also, when its great horn, Alexander, was broken, four "notable

horns " came up in its place and the arrogant little horn sprang up and waxed great " toward the south and toward the east and toward the pleasant land." Here again we have the tyrant Antiochus dragging down some of the host of heaven and of the stars, and stamping upon them. Unquestionably the description refers to the ruthless persecution by which the Syrian king tried to crush out the Jewish worship, when he suppressed the daily sacrifice in the temple and set up the altar of Olympian Zeus in place of that of the burnt offering. The horror of this desecration to the devout of Israel it is easy to imagine; but it could not last. Its end is predicted in the vision as to come in two thousand and three hundred days, when the sanctuary would be cleansed.

The imagery of these visions, like that of Ezekiel, is borrowed from Chaldean art; and the angel Gabriel, notwithstanding his Hebrew appellation (man of God), is a creature of heathen mythology, unknown to earlier priests and prophets. He is made to explain the appearance of the ram with two unequal horns and the he-goat with one great horn between his eyes, and to tell of the king of fierce countenance who was to destroy the mighty and the holy people. This king would stand up against the prince of princes, meaning the mighty ruler of these people, and he " shall be broken without hand." This again is the hated Antiochus who, the faithful among the " saints "

must believe, would be destroyed for his presumption by their "King of heaven."

After presenting these visions of hope the writer undertakes, before a final vision of triumphant promise, to calculate in a Delphic manner the time that must elapse before the great deliverance. He now places his hero in the first year of Darius, whom he calls the son of Ahasuerus of the seed of the Medes. This is the same Ahasuerus that figures in the story of Esther and stands for the Xerxes of the Greeks. He was a Persian and not of the seed of the Medes, and his reign began more than fifty years after Cyrus had conquered Babylon. Moreover, he was the son and not the father of the real Darius. This is another of those historical incongruities which do not matter in a work of this character. There was no first year of Darius in the period from which the writer projects his calculations, but that fact has no relation to his figures.

He takes the seventy years which Jeremiah is represented as predicting for the servitude of the nations to the king of Babylon, as seventy "weeks" (of years), or seventy times seven years. Reckoning from the supposed first year of Darius, he makes that the period for the "accomplishment," or completion, of the "desolation of Jerusalem" in the destruction of the oppressor against whom his people were struggling as he wrote. Preliminary to an explanation

by the angel Gabriel of this period of weeks, he makes Daniel set his face "unto the Lord" and utter a prayer, which is patterned upon that of the priest Ezra when he discovered that the Jews at Jerusalem had been intermarrying with the people of the land, and that of the Levites at the fast and the confession of the people when the law book was read, as related in "Nehemiah."

According to Gabriel's explanations seven of the weeks of years cover the actual exile down to the release by Cyrus, and sixty-two more come down to the cutting off of the "anointed one," which refers to the slaying of the high priest Onias in 171 B. C. This brings us to the last week of seven years, in which the people of the detested "prince" would destroy the city and the sanctuary. But his end would "come with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war." For half the week he would cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, but wrath would be poured upon the desolator. The chronology is altogether imperfect, but that did not signify then and signifies less to us. It was at the beginning of this last seven years that Antiochus plundered the temple, and it was about the middle of that period, in 168 B. C., that the worship was suppressed, the law book was burnt, and sacrifices to Zeus and the Olympian gods were forced upon the Jews, which led to the rash deed of Mattathias at Modein and the insurrection which was kept up

by his five sons until the Jewish community was freed from the domination of the Syrian kings.

The temple worship was restored as the result of victories by Judas Maccabæus in 165, and whether this book was written shortly before or soon after that event is not certain. If before, the author already felt confident of the result. The calculation of times is the prelude of a vision said to have occurred in the third year of Cyrus at Babylon, which was seventy years after that third of Jehoiakim in which Daniel is supposed to have been brought from Jerusalem. This vision does not appear in a dream, but, after a fast, and by the river Tigris. In character it is similar to those of Ezekiel by "the river Chebar." This is a vision of promise of coming relief. The supernatural being who makes the revelation, clothed in linen, with a body like beryl, a face like lightning, eyes as lamps of fire, and feet like polished brass, recounts what purports to be the coming history from the third year of Cyrus through the Grecian conquest, the breaking up of the kingdom and the varying contests between the Seleucids and the Ptolemies. There are allusions to events, purposely made obscure, since they purport to prefigure in vague outline what is assumed to be in the far future. It all leads up to the pollution of the sanctuary, the taking away of the daily sacrifice and the setting up of "the abomination that maketh desolate." The reference to Anti-

ochus is again unmistakable in the king that was to exalt and magnify himself, speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and prosper "till the indignation be accomplished." His exploits are alluded to in ambiguous terms, but it is said "he shall come to his end and none shall help him."

In that direful time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, Michael "the Great prince that standeth for the children of thy people," would stand up, and everyone that was "found written in the book" would be delivered. Even many of those who had fallen or perished in the struggle and slept in the dust of the earth, would awake, "some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt, and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." This was to come in that distant future prefigured from the time of Cyrus, but the writer forgets or disregards the point of view of his Daniel's vision in enigmatically figuring out that it would be a "time, times and a half," meaning apparently three years and a half, when "all these things shall be finished." Again it is said, looking forward as to a far future, that from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away and the abomination that maketh desolate set up there shall be "twelve hundred and ninety days," but he was to be blessed that "waiteth and

cometh to the thousand, three hundred and thirty-five days." And Daniel was to "rest," but would stand in his lot "at the end of the days."

All this is sufficiently vague as prophecy of coming events, but the events which came were quite different from those anticipated by the pious visionary who wrote the book. The temple service was indeed restored. Antiochus Epiphanes perished the next year, and there was a radical turn in events. But what the enthusiast of the tales of wonder and the visions of promise looked for was not the triumphs of arms of Judas and the long struggle that resulted in the priestly kingdom of the Maccabees, which finally succumbed to the Roman power when Pompey carried his conquests over the East. These were human events such as were continually overwhelming the undying hopes of Israel. He looked for that long deferred interposition of Israel's God in behalf of his people which was to destroy their enemies and set up the kingdom that would be everlasting and would draw all the nations of the earth under its sway.

The great epic finds a fitting close in these visions, which predicted not only an end of the persecutions and afflictions that beset the people of God at that time of tribulation, but a realisation of all the hopes of the past in that glorious and everlasting kingdom, promised to the people of Abraham and the house of David by the Lord himself, and cherished in all the dreams of proph-

ecy. Human events took their destined way and the Messianic kingdom of Israel came not then or afterwards. But the promise and the hope took a mystical turn and out of them arose a new faith. Unwittingly the unknown author of the Book of Daniel sowed the seeds of a new doctrine of the Messiah, or anointed one, and of the resurrection of those who sleep in the dust of the earth, when his kingdom should be established.

XVII

THE GREAT EPIC IN REVIEW

IF we read attentively this mass of ancient literature, which a large part of mankind have deemed sacred for so many centuries, and as nearly as may be in the order of its development and by the light thrown upon it by modern historical and literary research, more intent and persistent than has been bestowed in any other field of human study except that of the science of nature, we must conclude that it is not amiss to call it the epic of a remarkable people. So considered, it is the greatest of epics, not only from its character, but from the manner of its production. It is so because it was not the product of any one great genius or of any one group of men of genius, but was wrought over and over from accumulating material and accumulating experience through a period of nearly a thousand years. It is not the work of individual or personal genius, but of the genius of a peculiar people, and is the expression of their character and their growth through the vicissitudes of more than that millenium.

It began, as all surviving literatures have begun, with oral traditions and legends of the heroes and

leaders of the people in their primitive days. These were embodied at first in stories and songs and chants, a form most readily transmitted from generation to generation before writing came into use. When reflection succeeded to mere memory and imagination, the creative minds sought for the origin of their people and of other peoples, and for the origin of the world itself. Having no science and little knowledge except that which came to them from their surroundings and from contact with other peoples, they wrought from imagination and reflection the myths of ancestry and of the creation of the world and its inhabitants, using such material and such ideas as came to them. The religious instinct is one of the earliest gifts of humanity, and out of the mysterious powers of nature it wrought the deities.

In this respect the Hebrews did not differ from other ancient peoples. When they were settled in the land which they had conquered, and through struggle and discipline had become a nation, they had legends and traditions which they began to reduce to writing, and they produced myths to account for the origin of their tribes, the origin of their race and of all mankind, and the origin of the earth and the heavens. They had their conception of deity, rude at first, with a god of their own, different from other gods and an embodiment of their own ideals of power and character. At first it was not without the accompani-

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ment of minor deities. Their monotheism was a growth. In their myth-making they were not wholly original. Israel was not so old a people or so isolated as we have been wont to think. There were ancient civilisations on either side of the land upon which they entered after a long contest with its occupants and their neighbours, long before they became a nation or even a congeries of related tribes and clans. There had been communication between the Nile and Euphrates valleys and over the intervening lands for ages, and Egypt and Chaldea had each ruled over the region which Israel seized in an interval when no great power held sway there.

The first writers of Hebrew myth and story were not unacquainted with the lore of Babylon and Tyre and Thebes, and they borrowed freely from it; but they had powers and qualities of their own which moulded all material to their purpose, creating a literary garb for their thought and their imaginings of many colours and varied texture. A dominating characteristic of their genius was a peculiar pride of race, a sense of the superiority of Israel over all other peoples. Their God was not the only god, but the greatest and mightiest of all gods, and he had chosen his people from the elect of the earth. In time he would make them the rulers of the earth and subject all others to them. It was after the kingdom had been established and the reign of David and Solomon

had nourished this pride to the full, that work upon the epic, or the material that was to compose it, began.

The kingdom had been divided and myths and legends floated among the clans of both realms, Joseph, or Ephraim, and Judah. Some time, probably, in the eighth or ninth century, B. C., these were first wrought into a continuous narrative of the creation of the earth and the human race, the generations that followed, the fatal tendency of man to evil, the destruction of all but one family, the new start with a divergence upon the racial lines then known, and the consecrated ancestry of the people of Israel and their several branches. In this free use was made of suggestions from Babylonian, Egyptian and Phœnician lore. Traditions of a sojourn within the borders of Egypt, of oppressive servitude there, and of revolt and deliverance under a great leader, were woven into the story, which was brought down to the invasion and conquest of the lands on either side of the Jordan valley. There were various versions of some of the stories and they became blended into one continuous but not altogether harmonious account in the course of time. That was subject to revision by a succession of writers, copying, retrenching, expanding and modifying to suit their own conceptions.

The conception of deity developed with the intellectual and moral growth of the people. The

suave and manlike being who walked in the garden in the cool of the day to see what his newly created man was doing, and who talked with Abraham and made a bargain with him, became, in the time of deliverance of his people, the fierce divinity of Mount Sinai, who vented his wrath upon Egypt and awed the refugees under the deliverer into submission with smoke and flame and the voice of thunder on the mountain top. Through the invasion and conquest of the land he had promised to the seed of Abraham he was a god of battles, giving victory to his people so long as they obeyed his chosen leaders, and overwhelming their enemies.

Like other gods of the time he was an imaginary being, the creation of poets and philosophers, such as poets and philosophers then were. At one time, and until it was seen that this led too easily to the adoption of other gods, he was represented by images and symbols and was consulted by mechanical devices and oracles. For centuries he was worshipped with bloody sacrifices and offerings after the manner of all ancient peoples who "feared" their gods. The period of servitude in Egypt, whatever it may have been, of escape therefrom, of struggle through the deserts of Arabia and gradual conquest of the lands which became the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, was covered with the mist of antiquity when the first writers began their work, and they necessarily depended upon imagination in detailing events. They made

no clear distinction between what they knew and what they thought, and they believed the one as implicitly as the other. It is the way with the primitive mind and is largely so with the Oriental mind even now.

The first great uplift in moral and religious conceptions came with the prophets who rose when the nations of Jacob were in peril from powerful enemies, which was not long after the development of the myths and legends of Israel's antiquity. The prophets exalted the conception of deity into a being not only of infinite power but of infinite justice and goodness, but he was still the special God of Israel, and was given to wrath when he was not obeyed and to mercy when penitently appealed to. He would use his power over other nations to punish or reward his own people according to their behaviour towards him. Under the influence of the earlier prophets, the literature that was copied, expanded and joined together from time to time, took on the colour of their teaching. This was deepened and made more pervasive after the Northern Kingdom had been destroyed by Assyria and the other was menaced by Babylonia. In the period from Amos to Jeremiah the material of the epic was wrought upon in the spirit of the prophet, but it was far from completed.

After the powers of the East had destroyed Jerusalem and trampled upon the "holy mountain" of Zion, and the brains of Judah had been

carried to Babylon, this material underwent a notable transformation and expansion. The fact that Israel's God had failed to save his people from their enemies did not shake their faith in his power or his goodness. It was due entirely to disobedience to his commands and infidelity to his worship. It was what had been threatened through his prophets and was a deserved punishment for the nation's sins. All that was necessary now for restoration to favour and the fulfilment of promise of greatness in the time to come was repentance and amendment. In the fifty years of exile, prolonged indefinitely for some, there was much preparation for a new life and character for Israel. It was not to become a mighty nation with a glorious king of the house of David, as it vainly hoped, but it was to become a closely organised religious community that would exercise a powerful influence over other nations for many centuries, and through them over all mankind for all time.

In the development and solidification of that community there was an elaborate expansion of laws, of ceremonies and observances, which were deemed necessary to bind it together and keep it from contamination by evil influences within and without. Such laws and regulations as custom and necessity had established in early days had been associated by the first writers with commands of the God Yahweh in the wilderness of Sinai after

the deliverance from Egypt. This was to give them a solemn sanction and impose obedience, and from that time Moses was made the law-giver as well as deliverer. Whatever was promulgated was represented as having come down from the sojourn in the wilderness as commands of the Almighty through the leader of the Exodus. Not only was this the case with the terms of the "covenant" embodied in the early narratives and the code inspired by the prophets and made known in the time of Josiah, but with the whole Levitical system developed after the exile. A new framework of primitive history was made for this, but it was afterwards interlaced with the old narratives, in an unskilful effort at a homogeneous structure.

In the process of recension of what was to pass for history that which is now known as the historical and critical spirit was entirely absent. There was no effort to ascertain facts and narrate them with fulness and accuracy. In the use of existing material there was no scruple about modifying and adapting it to suit the views and purposes of the later writers. In this there was no consciousness of misrepresentation or desire to deceive, but each compiler wrought with a sad sincerity to set forth what to him was truth. The result was not history, so far as facts and events are concerned, but after all it afforded a picture of the life and growth of the people more vivid

when clearly viewed than if it had been presented in prosaic annals from careful records.

Some of the finest literature of this wonderful mass was wrought in the pious community, subject to foreign power and beset with many troubles, after the return from captivity by the streams of Babylon. In that nest of religious meditation and aspiration in and about the sacred city of the kings and prophets were bred not only priests and scribes but religious poets and philosophers. There most of the psalms were produced which were used in the service of the humble temple that took the place of the gorgeous fane of Solomon, where worship had meant chiefly sacrifices and placatory offerings. There wise sayings of the past were collected and hidden in a treasury of new wisdom, the fruit of discipline and experience. There was no pride of authorship, no sense of literary property, and it was the custom to attach revered names to the rolls that were stored in the treasury of books, made up from old and new material. As the name of Moses was attached to the laws from the earliest to the latest, so far as they were preserved, so the name of David was associated with the psalms and songs of praise and the music of the temple service, and proverbs and wise sayings received the sanction of the name of Solomon, to whom all worldly wisdom had been imputed.

The names of the great prophets were used with

equal freedom. Among the treasured rolls of manuscript cherished through the exile were many passages of what they wrote or what had been written by others from their remembered speeches. These were in much disorder and difficult to identify. When they were transcribed many mistakes were made in arrangement and in ascription to different sources; but there was no solicitude on that score. This or that would be freely attributed to a great prophet of whom it was deemed worthy, without serious thought upon the question of genuineness or authenticity. Additions, interpolations and modifications would be made, the better to fit the material to the purpose of the latest scribe, without the least consciousness of literary or ethical wrong-doing. Hence it comes that the great "books" of Isaiah and Jeremiah are composite productions, made up of imperfectly arranged, roughly connected or crudely blended material, ranging from their own time to the closing of the canon of the prophets. But the dominating genius of the prophets whose names they bear shaped the composition of these volumes, which have challenged the keenest powers of critical analysis in modern learning.

What stands under the names of other prophets may not be wholly theirs and even the names may not be those of actual men. It is the substance not the authorship that made them sacred in the estimation of scribes. Some marvellous stories,

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obviously fictitious and to the modern mind incredible, were preserved for the lessons or instruction they were assumed to convey; and some precious fragments, not in entire keeping with the "doctrine" of the time, were preserved by association with names that gave them sanctity. So the epic was wrought to completion, massive, conglomerate, amorphous, inartistic, but imposing, with much that is precious to mankind mingled in its great bulk with much of grosser quality, the deposit of centuries in which the treasures were stored. Losing the cement of sanctity it may disintegrate, but that which is precious can never be lost. The worst that can befall it is to yield to the test of modern knowledge and reason and submit to the judgment of common sense, which discriminates values and holds to that which is good. Thereby it will gain and not lose as a source of edification and inspiration in man's religion. It closes with visions of the future, but vision is enlarged since the time of Daniel.

THE END

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